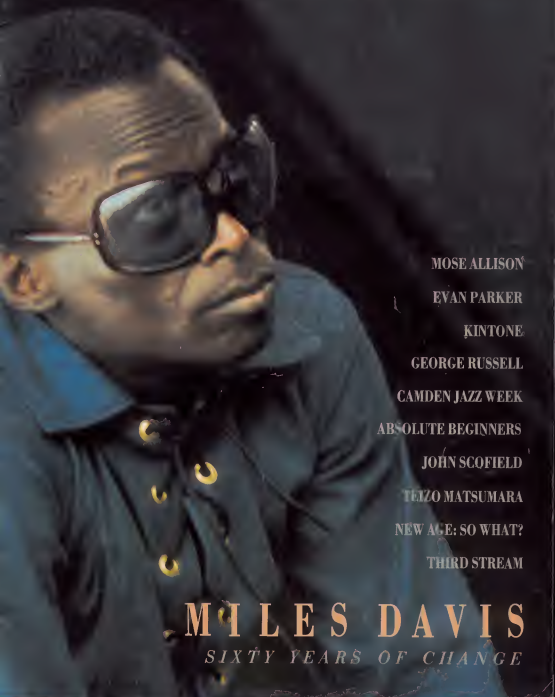


WIRE

THE JAZZ AND NEW MUSIC MAGAZINE ISSUE 27 MAY 1986 £1.20 \$3.50



MOSE ALLISON

EVAN PARKER

KINTONE

GEORGE RUSSELL

CAMDEN JAZZ WEEK

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

JOHN SCOFIELD

TEIZO MATSUMARA

NEW AGE: SO WHAT?

THIRD STREAM

MILES DAVIS

SIXTY YEARS OF CHANGE



WIRE MAGAZINE

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Cover: Miles by David Redfern

From his forthcoming exhibition, see page 6

"I can definitely say that music won't stop. It's all business to go forward." CHARLIE PARKER, 1953.

Edited by Jayne Hougham

SPIRITS RISING

FORMER CHARLES MINGUS trumpeter Jack Walrath is flying in from New York to join Spirit Level for a 13-date nationwide tour which begins April 29th.

Walrath, it seems, has worked with everyone in the Western hemisphere, from Ray Charles, The Drifters and The Tamlas Motown Orchestra to Jackie Wilson and Sam Rivers.

Spirit Level are established in their own right, with two successful albums under their belts.

Tour dates are:

APRIL

29 NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,

Corner House

30 HULL, Piper Club

MAY

1 COVENTRY, Bulls Head

2 CAMBRIDGE, Man in the

Moon

3 NOTTINGHAM, The Hippo

Club

4 BIRMINGHAM, Strathallan

Hotel

5 LONDON, BRENTFORD

Watermans Arts Centre

6 LEICESTER, The Braunstone

7 LANCASTER, Nuffield Theatre

Studio

8 NORTHAMPTON, Arts Centre

9 TORRINGTON, Plough

Theatre

10 EXETER, Arts Centre

11 BRISTOL, Venue to be con-

firmed

GLASGOW GREATS

TWO OF THE GREAT originals in British jazz, saxophonist Bobby Wellins and guitarist Jim Mullen, headline a 19-date national tour this month. Between them they have an impressive pedigree of playmates - Sean Tracey, Charlie Watts, George Benson, Tal Farlow and Wes Montgomery among a host of others.

With a selection of splendid musicians to accompany them, tour dates are...

MAY

20 BRACKNELL, Southill Arts

Centre

21 NOTTINGHAM, The Old Vic



Jim Mullen

22 MANCHESTER, Band on the Wall

23 CAMBRIDGE, Man in the Moon

24 NORWICH, Premises Arts Centre

25 MAIDSTONE, Hazlett Theatre

26 LINCOLN, The Roman Ruin

28 WEYMOUTH, Verdi's Wine Bar

29 BATH, The Pump Room

30 CHELTENHAM, Queens Hotel

31 EXETER, Arts Centre

JUNE

1 DERBY, Browns

2 HULL, Spring Street Theatre

3 NEWCASTLE, Corner House

4 DARLINGTON, Arts Centre

5 STOCKTON, Dovecot Arts Centre

6 SOUTHPORT, Arts Centre

7 LEEDS, Trades Club

8 BIRMINGHAM, Strathallan Hotel



Bobby Wellins

ACCORDING TO LMC...

ACCORDIONS UNLIMITED is a festival being presented by the London Musicians Collective on May 23rd, 24th and 25th, offering a variety of music which incorpo-

rates instruments of the accordion family. There's Eastern music from Guo Brothers, Indian group Adesh, and local boy John Kirkpatrick. Workshops are being held by Blowzabella and Mr Kirkpatrick. A film show featuring *Dry Wood* and *Hot Pepper*, both about Cajun music, and Richard Spence's *Arena* film *The Accordions Strike Back* will also take place. More music will follow from The New Mexborough Quartet, Howard Skempton and The Electric Bluebirds. Sunday culminates with Fred Van Hove, Annick Nozati, Phil Wachemann and Accordions Go Crazy.

For further details and festival schedule call Mike Adcock on 0727 35989.

TROPICAL ASSORTMENT

MAYAN INDIANS, Kabakaburi Indians, Carifuna Caribs and Etrra musicians from Jamaica perform ancient music, dance and ritual for the first time ever outside the Caribbean in the Commonwealth Institute's fourth festival, entitled 'Ancestral Voices', running from May 1-25.

The schedule for the festival is Maroons (1-4), Guyanese Indians (8-11), Mayans from Belize (15-18) and Caribs from Dominica (22-25). Tickets are priced at £4.75 and are available from the Commonwealth Institute (01-603 4535).

TYPICALLY TROPICAL

A NEW CLUB NIGHT with an international flavour is starting at Dingwalls, Camden Lock, N1 from April 30th, under the banner 'Woman World Beat'. WWW will feature special appearances by top international musicians and British-based 'world music' groups. Specialist DJs will be spinning the best Afro/Latin/Jazz sounds, with the accent heavily on DANCE! Exotic food and drink will complete the picture of tropical paradise. Guest bands confirmed are (April 30) Orchestra Jazira, (7 May) Santacumba, (14 May) Mumbo-Jumbo and Adinkra Dance Company.

IMPROVISED EXTRAVAGANZA

THE SECOND INCUS festival of improvised music will be held from 12/18 May '86, at The Arts Centre, Great Newport St, London W1. The schedule is as follows:-

George Lewis, Computer, with Evan Parker & Barry Guy. Paul Lytton (solo) (12) AMM Night-21st Anniversary (13) Evan Parker, Barry Guy, Paul Rutherford, Paul Lytton.

Steve Noble/Alex Maguire. (14) John Zorn/Derek Bailey. Alterations. (15) Alex Schlippenbach Trio.

Derek Bailey/George Lewis/John Zorn. (16) Han Bennink/Misha Mengelberg.

Alex Schlippenbach Trio. (17) Evan Parker/Derek Bailey. Han Bennink/Misha Mengelberg. (18)

QUAQUA TO TOURTOUR

QUAQUA BRINGS TOGETHER leading exponents from what has been termed 'three generations' of improvising musicians. Utilizing both structured and undirected improvisations, the five players will explore the potentials of various combinations. Quaqua are Radu Malfatti, Phil Durrant, John Russell, John Butcher and Paul Lovens. Tour dates are: May 11th, Africa Centre, May 12th, Southampton Joiners Arms; 13th, South Hill Park Art Centre; 14th, Oxford, Jersho Tavern; 15th, Liverpool Bluecoat, 19th, Leicester, The Cooler, 20th, Leeds Trades Club; 21st, Sheffield Leadmill.

EASTERN PROMISE?

FOUR NEW RELEASES MARK the launch of PAN EAST RECORDS, which is broadly described as a 'New Age' label. Pan East will specialise exclusively in Japanese music with an ambient and esoteric feel. The four records, release date April 4, are *Ikko* by Ichiko Hashimoto, *Sengen* by Seigen Ono, *Lisa* by Masahide Sakuma and *Morag* by Yoshio Suzuki.

GEORDIE JAZZ

THE METRO RADIO NEW-
castle Jazz Festival, firmly estab-
lished as a major event on the
British jazz calendar, runs for the
12th year from May 10-17 at the
Newcastle Playhouse. The festival's
reputation for variety within
Afro American music and for pre-
sented innovations within the
jazz idiom (it says here) is thor-
oughly maintained this year.

The festival programme is as
follows:— (10th, 8pm) Loose
Tubes, (11th, 11am) Trombone
Convention; (12th, 8pm) 29th
Street Saxophone Quartet; (13th,
8pm) Tal Farlow Trio; (14th,
8pm) Chris Barber's Jazz & Blues
Band; (15th, 8pm) Full Circle &
Youth Jazz Orchestra North;
(16th, 8pm) John Surman & Karin
Krog plus Courtney Pine Quintet;
(17th, 8pm) The Skywalkers and
Blues Bugles. Tickets are avail-
able from the venue from April
4th.

RIVERSIDE FACELIFT

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS, WEST
London's prestigious Arts Centre,
can finally lay a real claim to its
name. Although situated directly
on the Thames, only now, with
funding provided by Hammer-
smith and Fulham Council, can
Riverside utilise its position. A
new restaurant and bar on the
river, along with a new cinema
and dance studio and improve-
ments to the foyer are all in the
design stages and completion is
estimated to be July '87. The cost
is £400,000 with a second phase
in the planning stage costing
another £400,000. Shame the
Westminster Council can't shell
out the same amount for the poor
old ICA — then their future might
not look so bleak.

FRENCH DRESSING

THIS YEAR'S BATH FESTIVAL
(May 23 — June 8) will be under
the patronage of the French
Ambassador to Britain so the
emphasis is on culture, art and
music of France.

Over 80 live performances will
span the music of seven centuries.
Along with a visual art programme,
a contemporary art fair and
sculpture show will be a selection
of the best jazz around, not neces-
sarily with a French feel. May 23 —
Slim Gaillard Groove Juice
Special, May 26 — Stan Tracey Big
Band; May 27 — Keith Tippett;
May 29 — Bobby Wellins/Jim
Mullen; May 31 — Loose Tubes &
Guest Stars. An extensive festival
programme can be obtained by
writing to Bath Festival, Lanley
House, 1 Pierrepont House, Bath
BA1 1JY.

BRIGHT 'N BREEZY

THIS YEAR'S BRIGHTON
Festival is set to be the most
elaborate to date. There will be
jazz somewhere in Brighton every
day of the festival (May 2-25), in
all styles and several different
venues, including free jazz in
pubs, street music and marching
bands. Brighton itself is ex-
periencing a cultural renaissance
at present, and the festival will focus
on vigorous artistic activity — with
writers, poets, actors and most
importantly musicians. The jazz
section of the festival (Merrydown)
has numerous celebrated swingers
including Clark Terry, Al Grey,
Buddy Tate, Sallis Benney, Char-
lie Watts Big Band, 29th Street
Sax Quartet and many more. The
festival's events are too extensive
to list here in their entirety but a
comprehensive booklet and book-
ing details can be obtained by
writing to The Festival Office,
Marlborough House, 54 Old
Steine St, Brighton BN1 1EQ.

STAX OF SAX

MUSICIAN AND ENTRE-
preneur Joe Gallivan is organising
a saxophone festival over four days
at the end of this month at
London's Bloomsbury theatre. Full
details had still to be confirmed at
press time, but the event will take
place on 21-24 May. Meanwhile
Joe is establishing a new regular
venue at The Black Horse in
Rathbone Place and is continuing
to gig with his band Soldiers Of
The Road

CLUB DATES



SHEFFIELD Leadmill

- (6th) Clark Terry All Star
Sextet
- (14th) Pete King Quintet
- (21st) John Surman/Karin
Krog
- (28th) Carol Kidd Trio
- MAIDSTONE Haulitt Theatre
- (4th) GB Blues
- (11th) John Surman/Karin
Krog
- (25th) Bobby Wellins/Jim
Mullen
- (18th) Dick Morrissey & John
Burch Trio

LEEDS Coconut Grove

- (14th) Kenny Ball
- LEEDS Trades Club
- (6th) Pete King Quintet
- BIRMINGHAM Triangle
- (4th) Spirit Level & Jack
Walrath
- (18th) John Surman/Karin
Krog
- NOTTINGHAM Newark Place
- (4th) Clark Terry All Stars
- NOTTINGHAM Old Vic
- (14th) Fred Baker Big Band
- (21st) Jim Mullen & Bobby
Wellins

BRIGHTON Town Hall

- (8th) Clark Terry All Stars
- LINCOLN Roman Ruin
- (9th) Stan Tracey Quartet
- (26th) Bobby Wellins & Jim
Mullen
- LINCOLN Oasis
- (11th) Holloway All Stars
- MANCHESTER Band on the Wall
- (1st) Tal Farlow Trio
- (8th) Jack Walrath/Spirit
Level

- (15th) Pete King Quintet
- (22nd) Jim Mullen/Bobby
Wellins

(29th) John Surman/Karin Krog

ALDERSHOT West End Art Centre

- (9th) Ian Carr's Nucleus
- (31st) Tal Farlow & Adrian
Legge

BANBURY Moat House

- (20th) John Patrick
- LEICESTER Braunstone
- (6th) Spirit Level/Jack
Walrath

NORTHAMPTON Denagare

- (4th) The Chicagoans
- HALIFAX Trades Club
- (2nd) Sonando
- HULL Spring Street Theatre
- (5th) Tal Farlow
- (6th) Paul Brady
- (11th) Stan Tracey
- (29th) The Millies

L O N D O N

RONNIE SCOTT'S

- (April 18th, 1 week)
Marian Montgomery
- (May 5th, 2 weeks)
Chico Freeman Quartet
- (May 19th, 2 weeks)
Kenny Burrell

BASS CLEF, NI

- (1st) John Etheridge/Dill
Katz
- (2nd) Sambatacoda
- (3rd) Real Sounds
- (4th) In Cahoots
- (6th) Back To Base & 4 On 4
Quartet
- (7th) Ric Morecombe Band &
Phil Todd
- (8th) Jazz-Rock Spectacular
- (9th) Masquerade
- (10th) Cabana
- (14th) Spirit Level & Jack
Walrath
- (15th) European Connection
- (17th) Bush Masters
- (18th) Strings Attached (Jim
Mullen & Dave Cliff)
- (20th) Pidgeon People
- (22nd) Buller Train
- (23rd) Steel & Skin
- (24th) Sierra Fiesta
- (25th) Iain Ballamy Quartet
- (27th) The Sterns Quartet
- (29th) Michael Garrick's Fly By
Night Four
- (30th) Cayenne
- (31st) African Culture

NATIONAL JAZZ CENTRE:
TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

Donald Atkins reports

DEADLINES MAY BE THE mothers of invention, but the galling to hand in an article for the National Jazz Centre when its fate is within hours of being decided. As I write, the House of Lords are to pronounce on an appeal to prevent the Greater London Council from giving £25 million to voluntary organisations being set up wound up. If the Lords have turned down the appeal, the National Jazz Centre is under a cloud, if not, then it's a good thing.

declare my interest, I was at the meeting in 1968 where the idea of a jazz venue was first mooted. I am financially involved via a covenant and have kept in touch as a member of the Arts Council's defunct Jazz Sub-Committee and, from about 1980-82, as the Council's nominee on the board of what was still the Jazz Centre Society.

That 1968 meeting has passed into folklore, as has Ronnie Scott's Old Place from whence came this inspiration. Equally important, though mentioned less frequently, is something that happened in 1967. Graham Collier cracked the Arts Council's funding policy with a composition called *Workparts*. Not exactly the opening of the floodgates—in 1984/85, the Council spend only 4% of its central music allocation of £8 million on jazz—but the principle of public funding was thereby established.

The Jazz Centre Society found several temporary homes, expanded its activities and acquired full-time staff, all with Arts Council support. By 1977, it was ready to chase private money for a centre even before the site had been chosen. The sum asked for was a measly £300,000. Within a year, 9 Floral Street in Covent Garden had been earmarked and the estimated cost had leapt to £850,000. Before long, it was over the million.

The building was not taken over until 1982, and by now almost everyone had realised that the costs could not be met by tapping the private sector. Covenants had

raised just over £100,000 and efforts to reinforce his business or to find major sponsors came to nothing. A sponsor, after all, sponsors events he can afford to hang around until someone has built a place in which they happen. The Mechanics Union gave £100,000, but at least the lease could be signed. Aside from the covenance money and two smaller sums promised by the Arts Council and the GEC, that was the lot.

You may be wondering, if the Centre will cost well over a million pounds before a note is played and if the money raised is barely £150,000 – why go on? Whoever eventually writes the definitive account of the NJC will remark on the Panglossian attitudes struck by all parties at all times. Setbacks, and there have been a few, only reinforce conviction that the Centre will be built. Misplaced or not, this resilience, in part the result of many people in key positions actively plotting on the Centre's behalf, has kept the project alive during its darkest hours.

In other words, momentum has always been there: what is lacking is money. Once the decision to go ahead with *Plural Secret* was taken, the NJC became, in effect, an idea kicking its heels and waiting for its time (ie for £1 million) to come. Some may describe the tactics employed to spin things out as masterly. But as months grow into years, money is spent and debts mount. The Arts Council and the GLC put in a bit more. The Manpower Services Commission provides labour. When money runs out, work ceases.

When the GLC finally turns into Fairy Godmother, she is continually being ambushed by goblins from the likes of Westminster Council to stop her pulling out her magic wand before she is killed off by the Wicked Witch. It doesn't help, of course, that our Fairy Godmother has lots and lots of Cinderellas begging for golden slippers and for tickets to the ball.

Also the old JCS, accustomed to arranging eggs, took far too long

to adjust to its new role. Control and management of what will be a major arts centre have been less than the efforts of this are usually exaggerated. And compared to the amounts squandered on planes that won't fly, on missiles that won't explode, on motorways that crack, on new buildings that fall down and on defence systems that can't spot a double-decker bus in a one-way cul-de-sac, the waste on the NJC project — in percentage, let alone in real terms — must be pretty low.

That is why I am reluctant to write off the National Jazz Centre. Had the Government not scrapped

WORKSHOPS

Lorraine Bowen sets her crops in shape



Editorial assistance: Doni Garmel

of circular breathing — avoiding gaps in the music by simultaneously blowing out and snuffing in — a device, he said, he was forced to master while playing long solos with guitarists such as John McLaughlin.

Jazz Messengers Mulgrew Miller (keyboards) and Lonnie Plaxico (bass) treated us to a couple of tunes before opening the floor to questions. Sigh! Are there no short cuts to perfection? Seems not. Both Mulgrew and Lonnie emphasised the importance of practising scales, lots of listening and as much playing as possible.

If big bands appealed, then there was the chance to become a Loose Tube for the day. After a few hours sight-reading and working on the arrangements, sections came together to produce great sounds with some solos by original Tubes members.

Many people enjoyed the workshops for the chance they gave to chat about specific problems to other instrumentalists with similar experiences. Most were inspired by hearing the professionals at close quarters and for the more courageous among us, the workshops gave an opportunity to have a jam — a far cry from the normal confinement of a bedroom, instrument and record player!

THE CAMDEN JAZZ FESTIVAL wasn't just a series of concerts. Apart from entertainment, there was an educational value to the week. Behind the scenes, some of the top jazz musicians - Elvin Jones, John Surman, Dave Holland, Loose Tubes - spent time in music workshops, discussing aspects of their playing with keen instrumentalists.

Elvin Jones talked with a crowd of enthusiastic drummers about some of his early adventures of experimenting with unusual rhythms while saxophonists had the marvellous opportunity of questioning John Surman on all aspects of advance technique. John amazed us with his demonstration

IN A LATIN GROOVE

By Sue Stroud

I WAS PONDERING ON THIS LATIN COLUMN WHEN a freak offer of a free courier flight to New York arrived. So what follows bears no resemblance to what might've been... First stop David Maldonado's office to hear latest news of his proteges, Ruben Blades, Willie Colon and trumpeter Luis 'Perico' Ortiz. Blades, due here in June for a couple of gigs, was then filming on Governor's Island in Manhattan harbour, with Richard Pryor. He was rumoured (not in his manager's office) to have dumped his band, moved to LA, and be concentrating heavily on films. Willie, meanwhile, has produced a 12" single on A&M. The rough tape I heard is a shock, and an exciting one. Starting on sweet bossy a capella, it moves into a kind of salsa-hip-hop song, aimed strictly at the dance market, crossing every ethnic barrier in its way. Willie's voice without its characteristic strained, strange, rasp to it is soft and balladry; he's backed with a solid salsa outfit - Charlie Palmieri given a long, sensual piano solo which operates in a strictly Cuban-Puerto Rican time and mood, while Colon's trombone is left as long, bossy beams, and the percussion - electronic and "organic" - is dealt out by a teenager from a former band of ten-year-olds.

Next stop, the Mecca for salsa buyers in England, the outfit which keeps Hatman Records (Soho) in stock and up to date, Caiman Record store. The charming, helpful co-director Humberto Corredor, guided me through the racks as I groaned in frustration that we never see a fraction of these discs in England. One of his proudest productions (soon to be on sale in Hitman) is a re-release of Tito Rodriguez' *Live At Birdland* (1963) (Cubansations of such standards as "Take The A Train", "How High The Moon", "Perdido"), typically leaving the Latin membership anonymous, and announcing Zoot Sims, Clark Terry, Bobby Brookmeyer, Al Cohen and Bennie Ligon. Rodriguez was at the time one of the reigning Mambo Kings, rivaling Tito Puente and Machito every week at the Mambo Mecca, the Palladium dancehall. Machito came up in our tour, when I was proffered *Afro-Cuban Jazz Graciela, Mario Bauza and Friends* - the old Machito clan (Bauza was the band's Musical Director for years) in a super-jam of 25 musicians, arranged and produced by pianist Jorge Daltro, a wonderful record proving Afro-Cuban jazz is still a living force, and played here by musicians whose careers span from the 30s in Havana (Bauza, Puerto Valdez) to the 80s in New York (Paquito D'Rivera, Daniel Ponce, et al). And it comes on opaque white vinyl! Caiman are certainly carrying the currents of forward-looking salsa/Latin dance music/Latin jazz in NYC today, but their release of the 'girl group' merengue outfit, Las Chicas de Nueva York (the NY chicks!) is of dubious merit. Las Chicas are a novelty merengue, all-girl band, with four dolly singers who are sweet and lassy almost as Menuet. And they go down a storm, of course. They also confound the stereotype that all in tune, as

I knew it was never imagined it me arriving in seven-day-durable live salsa I am missing send me back: mega-star, Oscar Dominican Re-Merengue, Johnny D'Rivera's little-

NY Quarter ah well, I got a bagful of records, I heard a lot of Salsa on taxi radios and in stores, and I came home to find LI Cool J's tremendous "Rock The Bells" 12" with its utterly divine cowbell breaks

So it's not so bad back home, after all.



Hispans can sing if by nature, possible, but happening to New York for a ation when no took place. What now is enough to Venezuela's mega-D'Leon; The public's Mr Ventura; Paquito

ated Havana-

ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS

By Brba Koff

MADONNA! NOTHING LIKE A CHEAP CONTROVERSY to open, what? Just as few *Wire* readers would expect to read her name here, yours truly is equally surprised to find a Madonna tune in the Kopf collection. Her "In The Groove" rises all white, warbly and wobbly out of the rubble of a Sonic Youth live recording, of all places. It is allowed to groove along untouched for a good minute before the New York sonic gangsters inscribe it with scraped and ravaged guitar sounds, gradually increasing the weight of their untidy scrawls until the tune disappears for good under a welter of noise.

Their ravaging of Madonna exemplifies their palimpsest approach to the American popular music that is their first love. Their second - for the likes of Glenn Branca with whom three-quarters of the group have worked - has endowed them with the wherewithal to complete rock's overhaul. They mercilessly blast away at its original blueprints, first freeing and then absorbing its early vitality. In the process they totally revitalise an otherwise archaic form. Sonic Youth are perhaps the most radical group working inside rock, not to mention the most exciting. For proof search out their limited edition live double LP *This Time, The Last Time & Here's To The Next Time*, released as a taster to their forthcoming studio LP *E.V.O.L.* and *May tour of Britain*.

LEON BRITTON! Maybe not so glamorous a corpse as Madonna, but one still worthy of kicking around a while. The suddenly vastly improved and more purposeful South London group Test Dept have achieved the impossible of rendering a transparent British establishment figure as a piece of crawling flesh squirming to get off the hook on their live discoid release "The Faces Of Freedom". The accompanying LP *The Unacceptable Faces Of Freedom* is an extraordinary montage of metallic percussion, electronics, pirated radio samples and inverted military marches that amounts to a devastatingly bleak portrait of this rotting state. Paradoxically, rays of hope emerge through the vigour and intelligence of Test Dept's edicts.

ADOLF HITLER! And the test of his sick crew are the focus of East German composer Georg Katzer's "Aide Memoire" - a Berlin radiohonic play structured as a lost-we-forget symphony from the debris of Third Reich sound archives. Nazi song fragments, tainted classics, snatches of speeches and the voices of their victims and opponents are folded into a masterful collage that summons up the period's terror, just as it suggests the awesome nature of a totalitarian Gesamtkunstwerk involving the whole of Europe. Talking of Cut-ups...

WILLIAM BURROUGHS! The venerable old serpent of American letters is just one of the many voices caught up in an enterprising series of *Myths* currently being created in Belgium. *Myths* amounts to seven records from Sub Rosa, whose intention is, according to its inventor Frederic Walbeert, to create myths "not as an archaism, or an ethnological reference, but rather what is being created nowadays, in front of the sadness found in all closed speeches, in opposition to all kinds of affectation, we propose a new energy: The lightness of MYTHS". Releases 1-3, currently available, include WSB, Mark Stewart, The Camberwell Now, Sheffield dadaists Hula, SPK, General Strike, Genesis P-Orridge & The Angels of Light. Future *Myths* will include Jon Hassell, Gavin Bryars and Harold Budd, Einsiedlernde Neubauten and the late Joseph Beuys, Robert Ashley, Paul Lemos and David Byrne.



What am I doing here?



Little Richard



Divine Warlock

DAVID REDFERN IS ONE OF those rare people who make a living out of combining their favourite pastimes – in his case, listening to music and photographing the people who create it. David is acknowledged by many as the leading jazz photographer in London, and his Covent Garden Studio houses an extensive Jazz Library, along with rock,

blues, country and MOR. Many of his subjects are now good friends, making it possible to capture them at rare and intimate moments. Dexter Gordon calls him 'The Cartier-Bresson of Jazz' and Buddy Guy has proclaimed him 'The greatest jazz photographer in the world'. To celebrate 25 years in the business, David is exhibiting a unique collection of his photographs from May 19th at The West End Gallery, 186 Drury Lane, London WC2. The exhibition, fifty colour and B/W images, will include some previously unpublished material, spanning the entire 25 years. All the prints will be signed and available for purchase at the end of the exhibition. Wire is pleased to preview some of the exhibition photographs, one of which is on this month's cover.



Big Ben

THE NEW SOUND OF AFRICA

By Mark Singer

LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IT'S A MATTER OF MONEY, BUT IT'S beginning to be irritating: frontline African stars performing in Britain with desperately inferior or under-rehearsed backing bands, ignorant or idiot sound mixing. Last year Souzy Kasseya and Miry Kante suffered, and Salif Keita (*sounds Apolitical*) sank completely. This year the Paris-based Zairean singer Tshala Muana was directing most of her energy towards chivvying her inadequate back-up into some kind of focus. I'm all for audiences fighting to find their pleasure in genuinely difficult music, but Muana's tough and independent soukous is normally as direct and accessible as it gets. The following night Mo'Nique Kante, playing with Manu Dibango's band brought with him from Paris, played a blinder of a set. So I'm told. Because I was so disappointed with his show last year that I didn't go. In Paris, Muana has access to musicians at least as able and flexible as Manu's band (Souzy Kasseya often works with her): why can't we hear her in best possible circumstances?

Actually, there's a plus side, which is London-based bands getting the chance to match or even upstage the big International names. Mose Fan Fan's Somo Somo acquitted themselves pretty well backing Kasseya, but Fan Fan already swings respect in France and Africa. The revelation was Abdul T-Jay's African Culture, who completely wiped out the ridiculous Ali Baba. T-Jay is serious and substantial musician: it's about time he started getting billing alongside the Big Names.

April wasn't and May won't be such a confused riot of under-publicised and coincident events as the GLC's shut-down brought London at the end of March. To date (in shadow of deadlines now rather more distant than the day you were born) the most important events are probably in Europe. Kintone extend their British tour to Holland from May 13th to 18th, and on into Germany, Switzerland, France. Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks International bring Zimbabwe's *chimurenga* to the Angoulême Festival on the 10th, and through Holland and Germany before they dock here for the Nottingham and Bristol Festivals (30th and 31st). (Both these outfits are constant touring units - it's the only way.)

A Ghanaian Folk Opera is being staged at London's Shaw Theatre. If it's anything at all like Les Grands Ballets D'Afrique Noire, which topped a pitifully attended bill that included Max Roach and Ghanaian drummer/modern Ghanaaba at the Albert Hall (in busy March), it'll be stunningly exciting and excellently incomprehensible. See you there.

CLUBLAND JIVE

By Drizzy Woods

SO HERE AM I, POWDER-BLUE STRIDES HITCHED A GOOD foot away from white socks, loafers hanging off my heels (loafers have always hung off my heels - it's congenitally weak ankles what does it, you know). And wine-dark Wardour Street is glistening with the sweat of a generation born to suck in its cheeks and cock one knee like the tail of a quaver. Photogenic, me. No mug, just mug shot. And it's the second anniversary of the jazz room at the Wag Club. And I'm there, and so are Take 5 with enough Carmen McCraes, Jimmy Smiths and Donald Byrds to cock all the knees in hipdom. But most of all there's the Trummy Chase Quartet, now a soul band, sounding tough and (baptist) beastly with new bassie and pianistral person who scrunches a Hammond-toned synth convincingly beneath a bean-bag barnet. And Sir Thomas says, "This is another one by 'ank Mobley. It comes from a brilliant record called *Roll Call*," which I suggest you get immediately." And I'm going Oh, Sir Thomas Tom, that record cannot be got (unless of course their brothers at Blue Note have slipped it into the schedules for April - which I doubt).

And there are enough backing ballneck sweaters here to cause a riot-at-me for a generation to come and I'm worried, in case the backing bands from them red-rat spotlight are making my jaw less than a jaw less than car-park-like. And I'm thinking how sweet was Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* last week or so, like Noel Coward, the Brass and Bryan Ferry with curly moust and not enough horns (more confidence please from the one who's not), plenty slippery bass. And I'm causing my feeble brain-stuff to recall Strab (Soprano Tenor Alto Baritone, you see) at The Diorama (Victorian wonder in Regent's Park, you see) and how the floor ran with small children, seasonal mucus and Furious Pig, whose time changes more times than time: like Magma meets a jug-band in someone's private abyss. And I'm thinking this is only the beginning. Absolutely



PHIL CLARKSON

THE ELUSIVE AMERICAN TENOR PLAYER SPIKE ROBINSON will be visiting Britain sometime this year. Unheard of since those heady days at Club Eleven in the 1940s when he used to jam with the stars of British bebop, Spike has reemerged and taken the world by storm. His original jamming pals, such as John Dankworth and Ronnie Scott, went on to considerable fame but Spike left the scene as speedily as he'd arrived. Apparently he dropped into obscurity and devoted his time to civil engineering.

An initial tour in 1983 proved very successful and this year is assured of full houses all round.

Phil Clarkson

LESTER BOWIE'S BRASS FANTASY GRENOBLE FESTIVAL

LESTER BOWIE'S BRASS FANTASY, ON the second night of the Grenoble Jazz Festival, made the concrete walls of the Maison De La Culture glow, perhaps in an attempt to melt the ice on the nearby mountains. This was two hours of incendiary music, the flames fanned by seven brass instruments and relentless drumming. Bowie disassembled jazz and exposed its components in their simplicity and beauty: work songs, blues and dixieland, unified and newly expressed in contemporary terms by Bowie's astonishing trumpet – true to the past but on the edge of anarchy.

Like Sonny Rollins, he knows the power of humour, and how to intensify banality with exquisite timing. And like World Saxophone Quartet, the band know the value of showmanship, each member (Bowie aside) dressed in vivid yellow jackets with orange lapels. A simple blues, reminiscent of "Blueberry Hill", was an exemplar from this band's remarkable showcase: Bob Stewart's deep, deep throbbing tuba, sometimes sounding like a lyrical electric bass, and trumpets, trombone and french horn exalted in unity; then fragmenting, with additional shards thrown recklessly around by the restless Bowie. Solos often had only tuba and drums for accompaniment, the rest of the band joining in on refrains with surges of sound.

They were at their best with these neo-New Orleans numbers, the reflective ballads lapsing dangerously into western soundtrack territory. But Lester's strength is with satire, simple jazz coded and deciphered with skill and humour to reveal a popular music of penetrating rhythm and gaiety. Then the musicians marched into the audience and danced with us: euphoric.

Tim Blackwell

HAN BENNINK & DEREK BAILEY LONDON BETHNAL GREEN LIBRARY

WE WONDERED IF THE VENERABLE old library would still be standing at the end of the afternoon, but it survived. It was a peaceful, mild sort of day. Han Bennink broke an awful lot of sticks – "it was an expensive afternoon", he confessed ruefully to me later – without breaking into a bad temper. He always looks exasperated in performance, this big, baffling Dutchman, but he's because he hurts himself into it. It's a tantrum of activity, not rage. At his right hand, Derek Bailey seems to carry on regardless, although he always plays much louder with Han than he does with anyone else – it's the only way you

can hear the guitar.

Drums and strings, plus a smirking melody played for a minute on a soprano sax. There's comedy in Bennink's music, I suppose, but it's on the deadly level of Monk. He is not a vaudevillian: he just uses vaudevillian tactics, the hilarious punctuation, the mad expressions – he's a slap-stickler for being busy. Of course, there couldn't be anything funnier than the idea of the imperturbable Bailey being twinned with bruising Bennink – they do not meet. They roll and tumble their musics out and let one light up the other. Han dismembers and debases his kit, Derek gets down to smaller and smaller fragments. They love it. The good thing is, we all laugh together.

Richard Cook

HOLLAND/JONES/MANGELSDORFF /SURMAN LONDON SHAW THEATRE

WITH MUSICIANS AS ACCOMPLISHED and versatile as these, brought together especially for the Camden Festival, one can never predict anything. In looking forward to the concert I expected intellectual stimulation, even challenge; I expected my aesthetic sensibilities to be satisfied; I had not been entirely prepared for such a bloody good time. The members of the quartet were clearly enjoying themselves immensely too. Surman's amiable demeanour always makes an audience feel part of a jam with friends, and his evident pleasure at playing alongside Jones conveyed itself from the start.

Elvin frequently becomes the focus of any band he is part of, and with lesser talents he can easily dominate. Even here there were times at Tuesday's concert when the others seemed to be accompanying him; not because he is loud or obtrusive, but the variety and inventiveness of his playing gives the impression that he is conducting and arranging from the kit. At this first concert only Surman consistently held attention away from Jones, yet it would be wrong to undervalue Holland and Mangelsdorff. Holland played some stunning solos on both evenings and contributed some fine compositions, including the opening "Homecoming".

Mangelsdorff adopted a fairly low profile on Tuesday, most of his solos setting characteristic low growls, long held and often out of tempo, against Elvin's complex patterns in such a way that excitement built up from the tension between two sets of abstract elements. On Thursday he was more assertive, producing more overtly emotional solos as well as an excellent unaccompanied passage

displaying his technique of humming through the trombone at various intervals above the instrumental notes. A long version of his own "Ravin' Raven" showed the straight-ahead side of his style to advantage.

Surman opened both concerts on soprano but switched to that booting, breakneck baritone (now back at the centre of his playing it seems) for Mangelsdorff's rather Monkish theme "Hot Hot". On all the horns he was at his exultant, exhilarating, exciting best, and Thursday brought a sumptuous "Prelude To A Kiss" reminiscent of Hodges, Webster, Shepp and, especially, Surman as he ranged all over the baritone.

If there may have been nothing new or startling to be heard there were no clichés, no coasting either. Tuesday's concert had been so good I turned up on Thursday on the chance of returns and got a front-row seat. I do not think it was simply closer proximity to the band that made the second gig seem harder, faster, more intense, ending with a scorching "E J Blues". These four musicians are complete masters of their instruments; the three Europeans have proved themselves capable of enough difficult and austere music to please the critics and my own most solemn moods, but here they hit the right pitch for a theatre-full (or two) happy to be zapped with some direct, communicative and committed blowing.

Barry Witherden

LOOSE TUBES COURTNEY PINE QUINTET LONDON SHAW THEATRE

IT LOOKED LIKE A PREMEDITATED fanfare for new British jazz, and the point that this night sold out faster than any other in the Jazz Week should have pricked any lingering doubts about support for Our Chaps. But the music was disappointing.

Pine's group are a precociously skilled outfit who have much to figure out yet about what to say and how long to say it. In an overlong set the tunes were nearly all cast in the same medium-fast tempo: scintillant Cleveland Warkus is misplaced, and the rhythm section is excitable without having anything to bite on. Endless chromatic solos took all the air out of the set, and it was left to the charismatic Pine to carry the weight – he shows off too much, and there's too many overblown and pointless notes on both tenor and soprano, but Courtney has all the right makings of a strong, immediate voice. He just needs time. Can we find it in ourselves to give him some, please?

Loose Tubes are more than just the numerical opposites to Pine's entourage, where



NICK WHITE

Art and the dance

the tenorman's band are bound up in straight-laced power, the Tubes fritter their music away through the strain of college grad humour which seems to be jazz's way of 'lightening up'. When they have 22 good players on hand, that seems wasteful to me. The potential of the band to deliver a set of iron clout is traded in for a series of sucker punches: for everything with the substance of "South Africa", there's something as dumb as their idiotic hip-hop parody. The band revel in a Ra-like chaos a lot of the time, and it can bring about some moments of great excitement – when they all suddenly blaze into focus as a single entity. But we're bystanders, mostly, at a confusion of personal fun and garbled arrangements. I'll give them more time too.

Richard Cook



ART BLAKEY LONDON SHAW THEATRE

THIS SPLENDID EVENT, FEATURING the Messengers, jazz rapper Jalal Nuriddin and two dance groups, received a long and merited standing ovation from a sell-out audience. The Messengers, who played two longish sets due to the absence on *The Tale of the Jazz Defektors*, were in relaxed, swinging mood, with their augmented line-up featuring Terence Blanchard suave yet fiery as ever on trumpet, Timothy Williams and Jean Toussaint rounding out the sound beautifully on trombone and tenor respectively, Mulgrew Miller supple on piano; Lonnie Plakko faultless on bass and, fierce and apparently endlessly inventive, Donald Harrison on alto.

The whole was, of course, fuelled and driven along remorselessly by Art Blakey.

The tight, infectious life they injected into newish material and standards like "Moanin'" was picked up on the latter by a British front line featuring Courtney Pine, Philip Bent, Steve Williamson, Gail Thompson and Colin Graham, with Bobby Watson, the musical director and alto player. On "De Jackle" the enthusiasm was given visual form by the inventive IDJ, who provided proof, were it needed, of just how danceable the Messengers' music is. They were joined, in a mock

cutting-contest, on "Night In Tunisia", by Mahogany, another dance group.

The Messengers simply go from strength to strength and the prospect of Dick Fontaine's forthcoming film and book about them becomes ever more mouth-watering. I just hope that the success of this gig will encourage the staging of more similar "mixed media" events based on jazz – the trail-blazing Westbrook can't be left to soldier on alone for ever.

Chris Parker

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Assembled specially for the Camden Festival, and based around a nucleus of The Guest Stars, Gale Force 17 brought together 19 women players of different generations and differing styles – a wealth of diversity shaped into coherent power by Sharon Freeman, deputising for the indisposed Melba Liston. The mood was generally gusty; keen ensemble blasts alternating with a string of solos that veered from excitable huffing to the more thoughtful draughts of Annie Whitehead, Kathy Stobart and Diedre Cartwright. The evening's most chilling moment, though, came when Sharon Freeman moved to piano for a lovely, ruminative blues solo that, for its duration, completely stilled the set's breezy air the eye of the storm.

Earlier, a nine-piece a cappella group, Jan Ponsford's Vocal Chords, misdirected their talents into being Jolly Good Fun. Some tricky arrangements and funny lyrics did spark moments of glorious frivolity, but with no sense of emotional depth or commitment to the set, these were laughs in a vacuum. It seemed a case of too many voices, too little to say.

Graham Lock

ANITA O'DAY
LONDON RONNIE SCOTT'S

LOOKING SVLTE AND EXTREMELY spiritedly, and huskily whispering and scattering her way through such standards as "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You", "S Wonderful", "Honeysuckle Rose" and the like, O'Day quickly and apparently effortlessly won over everyone in a packed midweek audience, except your reviewer. I found her continual wacacding and (generally) fake-rude banter with her band – John Poole (d); Lennie Bush (b); Tommy Whittle (ts) and Merrill Hoover (p) – irritating and unnecessary. At one point, she asked Lennie Bush for "an oompah in the key of C". He obliged. She cut him off with a

theatrical grimace at the audience: "You can do better than that! You've been doing it all your life." "You give me the time and I'll do it," replied Bush. If his grim look was part of the cabaret, like her grimace, then he's an even better actor than he is a bassist.

I relay this at such length because it illustrates, better than a lengthy critical analysis of her singing would, just why I was dissatisfied with her performance: the show-woman eclipsed, at least on this particular night, the great jazz singer. Asking around, I find I'm isolated in this opinion, but I class her among those singers whose delivery concentrates on improvising at the expense of the lyrics' meaning – if Betty Carter can do both ...

Chris Parker

KAHONDO STYLE
LANCASTER NUFFIELD THEATRE

THE SOURCES ECLECTIC, THE MUSIC quite individual and such fun, there really was something for everyone here, even my Gran. From Clive Bell's opening shakuhachi solo which seamlessly mixed traditional and jazz techniques; through a marvellous violin/trombone duet (Sioned Jones/Alan Tomlinson), elbows emphatically a-fiddle; to Kazuko Hohki doing an upmarket *Jackawary* on the tale of Peach Boy, to sonic accompaniment from Peter Cusack and Simon Jones, who began with guitar and cello but moved on (with some vigour) to tapes, toys and spilt plectrums.

That's just to mention a few of the improvised pieces. Whereas it's the combining of this 'pure' work with ensemble acts of what are almost 'safe songs' that makes Kahondo so attractive. The songs take their flavour from points east; the rhythms and melodies of Poland, Russia, Greece, India, Japan. And when authentic instruments are used, like the khene or bazouki, they're not cited as artefacts of cultural conservation but fully integrated into the character of the group. So on, say, "Holloway Road" Cusack plays the funkiest bazouki lines you're likely to hear this side of the Urals (quite possibly that side too).

Of the attempts to fuse both elements, "Fluff On The Carpet" was the most successful. It began in Japan, moved west to Turkey (ish!) and veered off into a klezmer finale (sheet wedding music – the bit my Gran would have loved) with some particularly fine, thunderous violin from Sioned Jones. Hohki's exotic diction is a mixed blessing. When she's performing as much as singing she can have real dramatic effect. When she just sings her

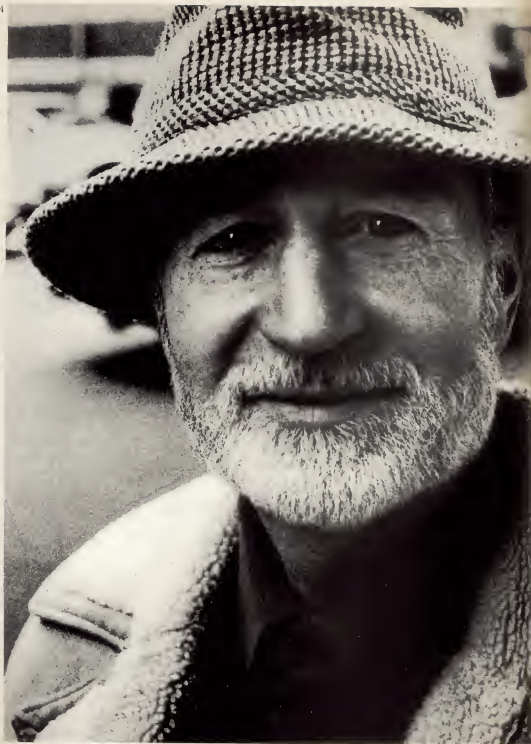


Sharon Freeman in charge

voice is a cross between Kate Bush and Lene Lovich, the words as hard to discern, the gist only just graspable.

Notably though it was the women whose sense of theatre and fun facilitated the flow of exuberance and goodwill. Bell tried as MC, Simon Jones assumed a constant air of mischief, but the dour back line of Max Eastley and David Holmes made no concessions to the pleasure of much of the music they were making; except perhaps, to bow sheepishly when the 50 of us present stomped for more at the end.

Steve Lewis



MOSE ALLISON

THE TIPPO MISSISSIPPI FLASH

Brian Case gets the price of cotton from a back country piano man.

YOU CAN DOODLE UP SOME DIVERTING

hypotheses on paper. For example, if Mose Allison had been born a few miles away in Tupelo rather than Tippoo in the Mississippi Delta, would have turned out to be Elvis Presley? After all, they both fell in love with the deep black blues of the area, Elvis with Broonzy and Big Boy Crudup, Mose with Muddy Waters and Sonny Boy Williamson, and effected a highly personal synthesis in their own music. But Elvis fused blues with country and Mose blues with jazz, which is why the former made all the money.

"You might have turned out to be a country and western piano player, Mose," I suggested to the man.

The soul of Southern courtesy, Mose Allison agreed before disagreeing. "It's possible, although I doubt it. I just preferred boogie woogie at an early age."

He still has that wonderful Mississippi accent though he's lived in Long Island for years, and it lures the interviewer back to that first *Black Country Suite* album. It feels like music to listen to while reading some of William Faulkner's stories about

Yoknapatawpha County, evocative, nostalgic, regional music. In fact, Mose studied creative writing at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Faulkner's home town back in the 60s.

"I used to see Faulkner all the time, driving around Oxford in this old car with the top down, like a do-it-yourself convertible. A friend of mine saw him go by on the square in his overalls and old suit coat, and he said, 'That's the most distinguished tramp I ever saw.' I used to write too, but when I got real serious about playing and writing songs, I just got away from that. It's in the back of my mind though that I'll go back to writing. I'll tell ya, Faulkner's brother John wrote a novel called *Dollar Cattle* that's more like the part I came from. You know, World War One saw the best price there's ever been for cotton. It's one of the few commodities that sells for less now than it did in 1914."

Mose has worked steadily since that 1957 debut album, experiencing small vogues from time to time. His disciple, George Fame, sparked off one of them, and the new generation of rising jives who have dug back to Astrud Gilberto have also developed a taste for Mose's laconic, faintly lugubrious singing voice. Meanwhile, the pianist-composer-singer has been developing, listening to Bach, Bartok, Scriabin, Hindemith and Ives, and building up his left hand. In the 50s, he played with Stan Getz, then Gerry Mulligan, then Zoot & Al, and then Cher Baker, but these days he tours mainly alone, picking up

rhythm teams wherever he works.

"Around New York I use drummer Tom Whaley and either Dennis Irwin or Rarso Harris on bass. In San Francisco, LA or New Orleans I've got other good pairs. They all have a different approach to my music, and it's good for me to get that different slant on it. It keeps me fresh. If a club doesn't have a good piano, I tell them to get a Yamaha CP70, so that's helped a lot.

RECEIVED OPINION HAS DISCOVERED

a lot of Al Haig, John Lewis and George Wallington in his keyboard style, but Mose begs to differ.

"No, I wasn't the kinda piano player they were. They're all schooled bebop players, all playing Charlie Parker method, his intervals, his turnarounds. That wasn't my bag at all. I'm a self-taught player. My favourite players were Nat Cole and Erroll Garner - they were my sensual influences. I liked Thelonious Monk a lot, but I don't think he was a bebopper either. He's like an eccentric traditionalist: which is about what I consider myself to be. I was also influenced by Lester Young, even though he was a tenor player. Until Charlie Parker, the timing and phrasing was pretty much what Louis Armstrong had done - even Lester Young, Billie Holiday, the whole bit, the whole Swing era.

"I saw Lester on one of his last jobs in New York, and it was a real lesson. The lesson was that there was nobody there, the waiters were banging the tables around, the musicians were unsympathetic - and Lester was playing beautiful. I mean, he didn't sound like he did when he was 30 years old, but he was playing beautiful. It was at the Five Spot, and a couple weeks before there'd been some new group there and the place was packed. You couldn't get to it. It taught me something about New York. About being IN. Instead of worrying about quality, everybody wants the latest thing, you know. And there's Lester who's influenced the world playing to no audience. I wanted to ask him to let me sit in that night, but I didn't get around to it and I've always regretted it.

"That brings up another hero of mine, a musician also from Mississippi, Brew Moore. The thing that I admired about Brew - and admire more and more as I play with unimpaired rhythm sections - he always played great. I've heard him play terrific with some of the loudest musicians, man. In a roadhouse with a local Mississippi band. I loved Brew. I went to the restaurant in Copenhagen where he broke his neck to see where it happened, and it's a long narrow flight of stairs. He'd just

inherited some money. I mean, for the first time in his life, he had some money in his pocket, and he went out to celebrate and fell down the stairs."

Talk of Bach brought us to Tristano. All of Tristano's disciples have had trouble with rhythm sections, from bomb-droppers to backbeat automatons. The serpentine lines take careful launching.

"He was trying to do one of the things I'm trying to do right now which is trying to get away from the two-beat. The traditional method of playing jazz is you have that sock cymbal there and you go MMM-CHICK all night. Someone told me Tristano used to take the sock cymbal away from the drummers. Now I can sympathise with him. That CHICK on two and four all night is constricting to me. I'm trying to get that open-time feeling. First thing I tell drummers is NO backbeats! My theory is that whole heavy backbeat thing came about as a way of playing to dumb audiences trying to show them where to clap their hands. Some A&R man thought of that! You listen to some traditional jazz - they didn't play with that backbeat. You listen to Jo Jones with the original Basie band - he wasn't playing no backbeat. Well, I consider some of Lennie Tristano's groups that he had when I first got to New York some of the top listening experiences that I've had.

I consider Tristano and Bud Powell to be the founders of modern piano playing."

MOSE ALLISON'S PREOCCUPATIONS

have always been about improving essentials - timing, phrasing and, vocally, breathing. He does not bend your ear about new frontiers.

Writers have seen his singing in the tradition of Hoagy Carmichael and Randy Newman, but he puts it more diffidently.

"I'm not Betty Carter. My singing, it's still like Louis Armstrong. It's all Louis Armstrong so far as phrasing goes. I'm out of the blues people too, Muddy, Sonny Boy and Percy Mayfield. My style was pretty much solidified there."

His career is progressing nicely, at his speed and aspirations. He gets a little bonus every so often, like the phonecall from Ry Cooder - Ry: "I consider myself a song prospector" - to use Mose's "Meet Me In No Special Place" for the movie *Breathless*. Mose got paid, but he can hardly hear it. His last album appeared on Elektra Musician, and disappeared with that label, but Bruce Lundvall is fixing to sign him to Blue Note.

"I'm playing the music I want to play right now. I'm interested in performing. That's where I have my fun."



K I N T O N E
PLAYING FOR PEOPLE'S LIVES

Mark Sinker discovers an African body, logic and purpose.



"I DON'T SLEEP, I HAVEN'T HAD A sleep in this place. I don't know what sleep is."

All musicians have to face the problem of paying the rent. That's the way things are. But the way things are still seems to end up that much tougher for Black musicians than white, now as much as ever. For Africans, and most acutely for Black South Africans, apartheid, and all its strident cousins here and elsewhere, and the violence and the blindness that they need to face them, these are "facts of the world" that threaten to burst in on all the ordinary tensions and economic considerations, and blow them up into monstrous models of that original evil.

Kintone's guitarist Russell Herman, a small and wiry man, talks with numbing directness about the stupidities they have to face every day, the competition infesting music, the racism that still allows focus to shift so quickly from the African origins of the music to the European copyists.

"The feeling was, although it wasn't said in so many words, that we should do something that had to do with home, with the struggle in South Africa."

Frank Williams, his compatriot, and the band's co-founder and sax-palmer, tends to be more pensive, speculative. (On-stage, they play soprano and flute in duet: it's a remarkably moving thing, to see two hard-bitten men so transported by the bright light double song.) "It's about contributing to that struggle first and foremost, in the end, I mean."

Preconceptions and prejudice still cloud the West's understanding of Africa: these are what they're hoping to blow away.

"In South Africa there is a very long music tradition, but because of the way things are, and the way our side of the story's been repressed and put down, the things that come out of South Africa that the world is supposed to know about is gold and minerals, and a cheap work-force." For the time being, they're in exile, but the ties will never be broken. "It's a bit like language, there are set phrases and words in a language. With our music there are set phrases as well, and we take those things and play them. They're part of us, they're what we've heard all our life. You don't forget your language."

We have come too easily to see African music as a good-time after-hours escape music. It's an expectation that puts pressure on bands like Kintone.

"They don't want us to be political," says Herman darkly. "Which is why they created a word like that. The word 'politics' just doesn't sound right now. It doesn't make sense, it's a negative word. But our politics is the most positive thing to us, it's about our lives. All we're saying is, this is what's happening, this is what's been going down, this is what's not going to go down any more."

REVIEWING THEIR DEBUT LP *GOING*

Home some months ago, I found myself unable

to move past the surface of the music with the ease others seemed to have done, and I reacted with a confused write-up that didn't entirely get across what I wanted to say, let alone those things they felt that they were saying. Anxious that their intentions be understood, they contacted me, and an interview was arranged, to take place in Herman's Brixton home. Four members are present: Herman and Williams, Tony Cedras, a new participant just arrived from SA, and Londoner Tim Atkins. The other two, Peter Trotman and Adrian Reid, are both Londoners. They can't make it. (Reid, in fact, is in India playing with Boney M!)

"This is what's been
going down, this is
what's not going to go
down any more."

Although my problem with the music certainly stemmed in part from preconceptions about what constituted a genuine African music, in retrospect a lot of it was simply to do with habits of reviewing, and particularly habits of attitude towards anything fusion-flavoured. Habit combined with the disancing intrinsic to the process of recording becomes particularly tricky when listener and musician come from different cultures. It's all too easy to fall into some mode of judgment that recapitulates the colonisation of times past or the oppressions of the present. The whole dreadful history of the European in Africa and the African in Europe silently interposes itself.

But fusion, and how it works, and what it can do, all these remain problematic, I think. For some, it's simply imploded into a dead mass of mannerisms, with a form and an audience that — by their lack of adventure? — seem to suck all new impulses down into the inescapable gravity well. Where other musics are just so much exotic flavouring, to be drained of life even as they fail to enliven the jaded sound.

Kintone are as saddened as anyone alive to music's potential must be by the endless reproduction of what drummer Atkins calls "good Steve Gadd clones, good Michael Brecker clones." But Herman in particular is dubious about the idea of Adventure. "It's because of that thing that the world is in the state it's in. People are being so adventurous, they're flying about in space and shit like that. It's things like that are creating our major problems."

Williams agrees: "They don't know the first thing about communicating with somebody sitting next door to them."

Communication was certainly often cited, in justification of the original fusion projects.

The throwing together of jazz, this deepest personal and cultural exploration of the ways and means of music, with various lesser, but more popular, forms, to spread the word, to speak abroad. Music as Universal Language — it's a beguiling and abiding objective. And fusion was said to have found the perfect vehicle.

But it only takes Herman's quiet reminder that he's never learned his own people's language, thanks to the Apartheid state, to make us think a little deeper. All too often, a Universal Language means no more, in political-historical terms, than a language that's conquered successfully.

What's different about Kintone is that in their music the African voice is not simply an exotic flavour, it's in fact the root and the body and the logic and the purpose, transmuting from below this sometimes stifling style. Perhaps in *Going Home* it's still muffled (the production is not a help, for a start): but repeated listening allows it to operate with gentle subtlety to change and reinvigorate what may begin by seeming all too ordinary jazz-funk strains.

There's a further difficulty. The sense of joy and hope that the song titles ("Going Home", "Freedom's Song") aim to conjure, that live performances really do achieve, it's a mood that's very fragile, given the daily recitation/distortion of the ANC's war with barbarism. *Going Home* has been asked to carry an emotional depth and complexity of feeling that standard jazz-funk never has to rack. As Herman puts it: "All we're doing here is just trying to be normal people". But the ambitions are doubling over themselves — to be ordinary and unpretentious club musicians, playing music for the simple pleasure of all. But determined at the same time to build the kind of world where such an ideal will not have to be put by to deal with more urgent matters.

AND IN FACT THERE'S one more little-remarked feature of fusion bands that might be worth considering: the tendency to collective or democratic identity. We've got into the habit of seeing innovation in jazz as something like the journey of the gifted hero out beyond convention, a lonely adventure of discovery. But this is certainly to force Afro-American music to conform to inappropriate structures, even the great loners like Coltrane were far from alone or selfish in their art. Discovery, in that tradition, has always been for and out of the community. It isn't a disrupting move — except possibly in so far as it attempts to return more fully to a lost and better past.

The present access to African music, and the rising power of this old/new voice, provides us with opportunity to be taught to listen anew, to change the ways we hear, the ways we interpret what we hear. So I'll give Herman the last word: "It's just that, like Tony was saying the other day, it's not 'music'. They make it 'music', and now it becomes an industry that can kill."





CONTEMPORARY



CLASSICAL

by Max Harrison

EVEN IF IT DOES NOT CENTRE ON the more ferociously recondite aspects of contemporary music which are alleged to be this column's chief concern, Simon Rattle's 'Après l'Après-Midi' with the Philharmonia Orchestra will undoubtedly be the most enjoyable series of London concerts in May. And the most *attractive*: it is no use listening to good music of any sort if we do not expect to learn something. It starts, as did modern music itself, with Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, and thus 8 May Festival Hall programme continues with Boulez's *Rutab*, Debussy's *Iberia* and two spell-binding Ravel song cycles, *Shéhérazade* and *Trois Poèmes de Mallarmé*, sung by Maria Ewing. Satie's ragtime-echoing ballet *Parade* turns up in the 11 May concert, as does Koechlin's little-headed *Bambler-Leg*, and subsequent programmes will present Boulez's *Éclat*, Messiaen's *Oiseaux Exotiques* (with Peter Donohoe at the piano) and *Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum*, Debussy's rarefied *Jazz*, etc.

As an alternative to Rattle's opening concert you could go and hear a piece called *Cobrawe*, by David Heath. This will have its world première at the British Music Information Centre on 8 May along with Scelsi's *Tre Pezzi*, Seabourne's *Roundley*, some Weill songs, and other things. Trombone recitals are pretty uncommon, yet two days earlier the BMIC will offer such an entertainment, with Martin Harvey giving the world première of P. Maxwell Davies's *Sonatina*, the London première of H. Werner Henze's *Sonatina*, besides R. Smith Brindle's *Tobal Gata's Legacy*. P. Maxwell Davies will also be active as a conductor on that same 6 May evening for in the Queen Elizabeth Hall he takes the *Fires Of London* through the British première of Piers Hellawell's *How Should I Your True Love Know?* Davies's own *Anticrist*, at times an uncommonly noisy piece, will also be given as well as his more useful *Waterlilies* and *Missa Saper l'Homme Arsi*.

As a result of another masterly bit of planning the Grosvenor Chamber Group's concert at Conway Hall on 11 May will clash with the second 'Après l'Après-Midi' programme. A pity, as the Grosvenors will be giving the world premières of Jonathan

Lloyd's *Songs From The Other Shore* and William Mival's *Crowd Out* as well as Berio's familiar *Folkways*. Two days later, on 13 May, Kanuko Shirane (koto) and Yoshikazu Iwamoto (shakuhachi) get together again at the Queen Elizabeth Hall for Michio Mijagi's *Hara No Uta*, Teizo Matsumura's *Shikyoku Ichibun* and, perhaps most welcome of all, Shinichi Yuize's *Somnocho Bukyo*. Just 24 hours later the Lontano ensemble takes over the Queen Elizabeth Hall for the first of two programmes of music influenced by – of all people! – the Americans. Constant Lambert's Piano Concerto takes a rather saturnine view of jazz, but Richard Rodney Bennett's *Jazz Calendar* is more optimistic; and there will be the London première of Steve Martland's *American Invention*. Speaking of Bennett, he has a 50th birthday concert at the Wigmore Hall on 20 May. Perhaps such an age places him beyond the sympathy of *Wire* readers, but the Nash Ensemble's programme is a good one, with Stravinsky's intermittently ragmeyer *L'Histoire Du Soldat*, Delage's exotic, almost erotic, *Poèmes Hindous*, Debussy's *Syrinx* and the world première of Bennett's own *Sonata after Syrinx*. A day later at the Coliseum occurs the world première of Harrison Birtwistle's new opera, *The Mask of Orpheus*. But he had his 50th birthday last year . . .

IF, INSTEAD, YOU FIND YOURSELF IN Brighton on 21 May, charge into the Music Room of the Royal Pavilion for the concert of pieces by female composers which Lontano is contributing to the Brighton Festival. Erika Fox's *Shir* for 14 players has its world première, Janet Graham's *Umi The Sound* has its British première. These will be followed by Nicola LeFanu's *Deva* and – one of this column's favourite titles – *The Cavalcades Of Scholarship* by Judith Weir. Mention of this event should remind us that a fair amount of contemporary music has wormed its way into some of the other festivals – Bath, for instance. This seems to be a rather far-flung affair because it is as part of the Bath Festival that Pierre Boulez will take his frighteningly efficient Ensemble Inter-Contemporain into Clifton Cathedral, Clifton Park, Bristol on 24 May. When they

get there they will play his *Improvisations Sur Mallarmé*, Messiaen's *Oiseaux Exotiques* (with Pierre-Laurant Aimard at the piano), Ligeti's Chamber Concerto and pieces by Stravinsky and Debussy.

The next day, 25 May, Lontano surfaces again, in the commodious Guildhall Banqueting Room, Bath, with Boulez's *Le Marteau Sans Maître*, still his most famous piece, and Mark-Anthony Turnage's *And Still A Safer Morning* (what poetic titles they go in for these days). Then on 26 May, if you want to avoid the Sean Tracey bug band at the Theatre Royal, Bath, pop into Wells Cathedral, where Simon Rattle, now with the City of Birmingham Orchestra, will offer his interpretation of Messiaen's *Tarantelle Symphonique*, a vast, almost indigestibly rich piece whose scale should just about be accommodated by a medium-sized cathedral. Next, on 27 May in the Bath Assembly Rooms, a Messiaen pupil, the youthful George Benjamin, will conduct the Royal College of Music 20th Century Ensemble in Messiaen's tribute to the birdsong and traditional music of Japan, *Sept Haikus*, with Messiaen's wife, Yvonne Loriod, at the piano. This will be preceded by Harrison Birtwistle's recent new piece, *Sacred Theatre*, and Tristan Murail's *Ether*.

Mark-Anthony Turnage bobs up again, in the spacious Guildhall Banqueting Room, Bath, on 30 May when Music Projects/London performs his *After Dark* and *Lament For A Hanging Man*. This programme will also include the world premières of four works specially selected by the mighty Society for the Promotion of New Music: Costin Miereanu's *Enlacements Infinis*, Paul Archibold's *Applaudis*, Javier Alvarez's *Tientos* and James Clark's *Downstream*. Then, finally, back to London, and back to 25 May, when at the Royal Academy of Music the all-powerful Electro-Acoustic Music Association of Great Britain will fuse with the Spectrum ensemble for two weeks the latter recently brought back from the USA, James Sellars's *Return Of The Cover* and Michael Yorke's *Vanadea*, which receive their UK premières, both illustrate the influence of jazz and – woe! – pop on young American composers. They ought to know better by now.

JOHN SCOFIELD

LIGHT STRINGS AND HEAVY COMPANY

The guitarist for MILES DAVIS has his own thing going.

Interview by BRIAN PRIESTLEY. Photos by JAK KILBY.



YOU MIGHT GUESS FROM THE WAY he plays the guitar that John Scofield would be extremely together and articulate in conversation. His thoughtful control of the instrument makes the concept of laid-back into something deeply exciting, in the same way that's true of his most famous employer.

When Scofield last came to London to play the Festival Hall with Miles, he was up against the clock. After delays at the airport, he was being ferried around by a company representing his record label Gramavision (the UK company in question were also working against the clock, since the very next week they were part of a multi-million take-over by Michael Jackson). The rough mix of Scofield's second album *Still Warm*, which he no longer had time to demonstrate, was the excuse for the conversation, but the hit-and-run interview situation did not prevent him from being highly illuminating.

So most of what follows is virtually unedited, apart from the intrusions of your narrator reminding you (for example) that, when he joined Miles late in 1982, John was joining a band that already had a featured guitarist in Mike Stern. "Miles has often done that in the past," Scofield explained, "like when he had both Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane for a while in the mid-50s. And I remember there was a time when he used Wayne Shorter and Joe Henderson together. So that was interesting and what's more Mike and I managed to remain friends through all of that."

Of course, Scofield was the one who eventually stayed with Davis although, like many of Miles' best 'discoveries', he had been on the scene for several years and made his first album as a leader as far back as 1977. Both this first date and his last for the Getman label Enja (the latter producing two albums, *Skinola* and *Out Like A Light*) were done live in Munich, while in between two now-out-of-print records came from New York studio sessions for Atista/Novus. The informal and relatively straight-ahead feel of these works contrasted notably with the much more 'produced' sound of Scofield's first Gramavision set *Electric Quiet*, which included Ray Anderson on trombone and Dave Sanborn.

"It's a whole different ballgame. I mean, in the live date you're trying to capture the atmosphere of wild abandon that you get in the concert hall, and the studio record date is completely different. You've got real microscopic sound, where you can really hear everything. I like 'em both, and I can't wait to do another live record. But at the moment, because Gramavision has come up with the kind of budget so that I can really do a good studio project, it's not that you go in for one day and just do it as if it was a live date. I've been enjoying that lately.

"I've always been a live musician, primarily. My whole life since I was a kid, I played in

clubs and the like. I'm not one of these guys like a Steve Gadd or Lee Ritenour, who makes his living in the studio, I'm primarily a performing jazz musician. And the sessions I did were jazz sessions, it wasn't like 'Today we're gonna do this jingle and then we're gonna do this TV show, and this movie score. See, those guys are in there all the time, every day. Even for the jazz dates, I've never done more than one a month. But we know about 'em because there aren't that many jazz records out there."

John then mentioned in passing (we were in a hurry, remember?) that his very first record was with Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker - talk about starting at the top... Looking up the facts, I see that he was still one month shy of his 23rd birthday when this happened in November 1974. Oh, and the occasion was only a concert at Carnegie Hall! Obviously the star leaders were not overfamiliar with Scofield's work, but he was recommended by Mack Goodrick who had taught him for three years at Berklee (and who, the same year, inducted Pat Metheny into the Gary Burton group). In the next five years, John toured and/or recorded with Billy Cobham, Baker again, Mingus, Jay McShann, Lee Konitz and many others.

"I did a whole lot of dates, just because Atlantic Records, CTI, CBS, the big labels were still making more jazz records. I was in the right place at the right time. Then after that, I think the whole record business sort of fell out. And then the independents were making the jazz records, so that you go to Germany and make a record, you know."

JUST RECENTLY SCOFIELD HAS STARTED to become prolific again, appearing for instance on most of the new Benne Wallace album (in contrast to the monochrome Slevie Ray Vaughan on two tracks), and he grabs the attention on bassist Marc Johnson's ECM record, which he shares with guitarist Bill Frisell. As well as demanding attention, it says a lot for Scofield's versatility that he can work with such diverse jazz players, and still sound like himself. The versatility is, of course, to some extent typical of John's generation, and especially the guitarists, whose first influence was likely to be Chuck Berry rather than B.B. King. (And don't forget that his first *Arista*/Novus album *Who's Who*, featuring Dave Liebman who later introduced him to Miles, includes a Scofield tune called "The Beatles", which has recently been covered by Gary Burton.) John is particularly interesting when talking about the totally different roles of the guitar in rock and jazz, which have coiled in his work and in his contemporaries.

"Anybody who's under 40, and who's a guitar player, has to be pretty much aware of this. And it used to be that there were really two separate schools, there were the people that were the ruckers and then there were the

jazzers. That's up until the late 60s, and then we started to have people that came along playing with rock'n'roll set-ups - in other words, light-gauge strings, and bending notes and stuff - but that also played interesting linear ideas, that maybe were taken more from the jazz tradition.

"There was a time when I would play rock'n'roll licks on one thing and jazz licks on another. But I think, thank God, that that's come to an end and that I'm able to live in both worlds. Not 'live in both worlds', but both things can be part of me. If I was going to play a standard tune with a group, I would play not with a sound like Joe Pass or something like that, but with more of a quote-unquote rock'n'roll-type sound. But I wouldn't get up there and play, you know, B.B. King licks, I would play the song - but there would be some blues inference in there' (Not that the licks are lacking, as the short track "King For A Day" on *Electric Outlet* demonstrates.) And then when I'm playing with Miles' group on more of a real rock beat, which is what he uses now, I would probably to a rock'n'roller sound like a jazzier. You see what I mean? So, hopefully, they're both coming together for me, and I think that that's what's happening with my generation now, finally - you know, John Abercrombie, Pat Metheny, these guys - 'cos I really have that duality in jazz guitar."

Does that amount to an admission that a lot of 'jazz guitar' is less interesting than jazz on other instruments?

"Well, yeah, I think that, except for a few great masters, jazz guitar has just not been as good, you know. I mean, we don't have Lester Young, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, we don't have that on the guitar. We've got some great guitar players, but it's not that. The guitar players are taking the lead from the horn players and piano players. But now the guitar has come into its own, because of some of the tonal techniques of rock'n'roll that can be applied now. I started playing this B.B. King, Albert King sound when I was young and, to me, that music in its pure form is completely related to swing music. It is swing music. I mean, you know B.B. King's rhythm-section was playing a shuffle beat, they weren't playing a rock'n'roll beat. And the shuffle beat that came from Basie's thing, it was just sort of a different version of that. So, when I got into jazz, I think I was listening to more horn players and piano players and all that. And *Charlie Christian*! Charlie Christian was really a tough-and-rumble sound. When you listen to his sound, it wasn't the smooth, Johnny Smith, 1950s jazz guitar sound. It was sort of a distorted amplifier sound.

"And also, well, Jim Hall was the first guy to use light-gauge strings, I think - this is a technical thing, but the real light strings that are easy to move around, and to bend and get this vibrato on. I mean, Tal Farlow's set-up

doesn't allow for that, because they're very hard strings. Well, Jim Hall started to play that, and it's a certain expressiveness that I think has come back to the instrument. I think that things are opening up, I think that all these kids - myself included - that started out on rock are finally getting the technique and harmonic ability that they can apply just to music, period."

AND HOW DOES JOHN IN PARTICULAR apply this technique to the creation of original material?

"Well, when I make records, I write music that's a vehicle for me to play on. I'm not writing songs for songs' sake, like some other people. Like I worked with Steve Swallow, who writes songs for their own sake, he's a real composer. I'm just writing little set-ups, to tell you the truth. Some of it would like to be more than that, but at this point that's what's happening."

Indeed, the new album *Still Warm* is full of such seemingly simple set-ups that become memorable because of the playing they inspire from the quartet of Scofield, Don Grolnick on keyboards, Darryl 'The Munch' Jones and Omar Hakim (the latter a connection that has since led to John doing some work with Weather Report, an enticing prospect indeed).

"The first tune on the record, this fast number that for me, as far as linear soloing in a sort of Miles, Weather Report tradition - I mean, I really think that this jazz-rock thing is not dead. You know, a lot of people made some pretty bad records, beboppers trying to make some money. But the idiom is still open, and I think we really achieved a certain sort of, for lack of a better word, *jazz-rock* feel."

Speaking of Miles, is the founder of this tradition still actively leading the field?

"I don't know if Miles thinks about actively leading anything. Maybe, as far as the group is concerned, he wants to play a real rock'n'roll thing to get a lot of people to buy his records. But, as far as a horn man and a soloist, he has to be leading because he's one of the best ever. It's just there, I mean his mind is still incredibly fertile in his playing and when he improvises. You know, when we get on the gigs, it's real nice and loose, it gets good. Making records lately, I think he's been going for the band sound to sound like a background band to a singer, you know, Top 40 stuff. So I don't relate to that as much as some of that stuff we did on *Don*, which I thought was more the way the band plays live in concert. So there's this sort of duality between what he's trying to do on record and what happens on the gigs.

"It's never boring. Because he's so great, you know. And the band is real good, good musicians. And no matter what, his musical ethic is to go for creativity. Even if he's playing Michael Jackson or whatever."



"This music was written for folks that don't breathe."

SITTING IN ON A REHEARSAL BY THE AMERICAN MAESTRO WITH HIS MOSTLY British band was an engaging experience. Russell seemed to be conducting off-handedly, puffing through labyrinthine scores with a distracted air; but a passage would be abruptly closed down with razor-sharp percipience – "Don't force the notes – play them easier, like legato – sounds like you're putting air behind every note." Sounded fine to me, but the next run-through sounded even better.

They ran through infernally hard stuff like "All About Rosie" and the pieces of "New York, N.Y.". The professor counted off breaks and unisons with his fingers: in a tiny Clerkenwell cellar, the band sounded deafening and thrilling. Rags and fragments, chippings of the finest scores. And very tough stuff to play. Mr Russell smiled.

Richard Cook

GEORGE RUSSELL IN REHEARSAL

Photographs by Derek Ridgers



"It should be real . . . primeval."



"Yeah, it's a little better, still not quite up to . . ."

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED THIRD STREAM?

An up-to-date explanation by Max Harrison

"DO THEY STILL CALL THIS KIND OF stuff 'third stream'?" asked our Editor as he dubiously turned the records over and over, passing them from one hand to another.¹ Obviously I was ready with my most irritating conversational gambit. "In a sense, all jazz is 'third stream' music," I replied. "Some people think it's strictly from the Dark Continent." I went on, "which may be why they keep calling it 'black music', but you remember what Grover Sales said?"

Like all too many people, our Editor had not then read the Sales manual, so in a characteristically well-modulated voice (got on with it - Ed) I declaimed the following: "Jazz from the beginning was a fusion, a *bonillabaisse* of sound from every culture washed up on these shores. West African rhythms, German and Italian marching bands, Protestant hymns, European classical music, opera, English, Scottish and Irish folk songs and their Appalachian and Ozark mountain derivatives, minstrel show tunes, 'coon songs', French cotillon or country dance music, Spanish and Latin melodies and rhythms, and a profusion of black folk musics - rural and urban, religious and secular - including slave chants, railroad gang songs, field hollers, 'sanctified' church music, and the blues."²

Nor surprisingly, that was enough to be getting on with for quite a while. But lately a number of further ingredients have been stirred into the mixture, and the result is such things as a vocal performance, with tambura accompaniment, of Monk's "Hornin' In" in the style of Indian classical music, or - just to keep to the same composer - a salsa arrangement of "Mysterioso" which leaves that spiky Blue Note blues entirely recognisable while transporting it to another musical world. These recordings, and others discussed below, clearly go beyond the original ideas of the official 'third stream' movement as defined by Gunther Schuller. He described it as "The result of two tributaries - one from the stream of classical music and one from the stream of black music - that have recently flowed out towards each other in the space between the two, leaving the main streams undisturbed, or mostly."³ Schuller also claimed that such music fused "the improvisational spontaneity and rhythmic vitality of jazz with the compositional procedures and techniques acquired in Western music during 700 years of musical development."⁴ But why stop there?

In fact what happened soon was that the idea was in the literal sense institutionalised, and there has long been a Third Stream Department in the New England Conservatory, Boston. The man in charge is

Ran Blake, who, besides achieving glory through being the subject of an article in the very first issue of *Wire*, has made some interesting LPs. He has said that when he began the department he asked himself, "Why must the two tributaries represent only classical and jazz? Why not substitute one of the many styles and traditions of ethnic music? What would one label the vital percussive tribal music of Nigera blended with the cries of the Ainu from Northern Japan?"⁵ The striking results of such questionings can be sampled on the two LPs which perplexed our Editor, *Third Stream Today* and *Third Stream: The Second Chapter*.

ON THE FIRST OF THESE

"Mysterioso" provides a familiar point of departure, the salsa arrangement already noted being by Youssef Rakha, whose trumpeter fizzles engagingly. Freer is Maritza Leal's piano solo, which skitters dissonantly across the keys, always with much rhythmic life, and altogether the small jazz combo instrumentation is made to sound noticeably fresh. In contrast, Blake's "Arlene" is scored by Hankus Netsky for a large group and achieves a successful collage of styles. After Akira Tana's initial percussive solos there are *pontilliste* entries by the horns which fuse into textures that relate - yet never submit - to big band conventions. Greater violence ensues, going far beyond Blake's melody; finally the piece subsides into uneasy silence. Had there ever been an Albert Ayler big band it might at times have sounded like parts of this.

Again, in "Wende", arranged by Albin Zak,⁶ the lines rove fluidly in and out of the structure of Blake's theme, changes in emphasis being wrought by shifts of instrumental colour. The combined freedom and discipline is remarkable, and taken as a whole this piece is as near to being meaningfully equal-voiced as a work for eleven players is likely to get. Considerably more varied, however, is "Pireas And Romsiosyni", which at just over 13 minutes is the *Third Stream Today* LP's longest track, though, like nearly all the other performances dealt with here, it keeps well to the point. Conjured by Blake and the singer Elea Odons out of materials by Mikis Theodorakis and Manos Hadjidakis, it uses the latter's banal "Never On Sunday" theme to symbolise what Ms Odons calls 'the Greece of the tourists'. A ghostly start is made by voice and piano, the lines gradually defining themselves only to be thrown momentarily off course by an abrupt piano outburst. There is a fine post-Ayler-styled duet between Bruce Henderson's alto

and Sam Marthews's tenor saxophone, incidentally reminiscent of the high-lying and heterophonically textures of Ayler's "Prophet", although the context is different.⁷

A more orthodox yet still inventive clarinet solo is heard from Eric Thomas, and there are interventions from Odons with fragments of Theodorakis's "Romsiosyni" ("Greek Spirit"). Henderson is heard from again in a match-like passage, the ideas of which are steadily distorted. Later the other two horns re-enter, but Odons and Blake re-establish the mood of the opening. This is changed, however, by the horns' continuing subdued participation, and a quiet tension predominates which it is not easy to forget afterwards.

THE INDIAN-STYLED

performance of "Hornin' In" referred to above is on *Third Stream: The Second Chapter* and is by Harriet Hurie. It makes a curious listening experience yet, like most of the other items considered here, may represent a step towards the fulfilment of Charles Ives's 1920 prophecy that all the musics of this planet may one day fuse into "a language so transcendent that its heights and depths will be common to all mankind."⁸ Certainly Daryl Lowery's treatment of "Una Matrica De Ruda" is another successful confrontation of outwardly unrelated styles, this Sephardic folk song being deeply coloured with the outer edges of contemporary saxophone technique. "Tonk" is prefaced with Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" from the bass clarinet of Dan Birtcher, then the tempo picks up and the busy 2/4 gaiety of "Tonk" itself, a 1950 Ellington-Strayhorn piano duet, is upon us. The fascinating instrumentation is: trumpet, trombone, tuba, piccolo, flute, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, two cellos, xylophone, percussion, accordion, with Nancy Zeitsman's marimba dominating, and through this combination the spirit of the original is reproduced in new terms.

After such ebullience Sharon Francer's unaccompanied singing of "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" comes as a considerable surprise. It is performed partly in English, partly in Hebrew, and listeners of a certain age will be irresistibly reminded of the egregious Dr Sholem Stein (author of *Bahama Mama*) and his theories about Hebrew influence on the Jamaican calypso. But perhaps the Shanty Peterstein EP is no longer generally remembered.

Different again is "Dance Of The Fury", a duet improvised by Hankus Netsky and Eric Charring on alto saxophone and guitar, first



ABSOLUTELY FAIRLY OK

Richard Cook has his say on Julien Temple's *Absolute Beginners*.

THE BBC'S MARVELLOUS *THE STREET* caught the atmosphere beautifully. Even those of us too young to have known the Archer Street environs must have felt a flicker of it from Dennis Rose's old movies of the jazz characters of the 50s. The grey demob suits slowly being replaced by sharper lapels, the bully boy haircuts, the scarfed women, the Strands – "You're never alone with a Strand," says David Bowie in *Absolute Beginners*. The slogan died with the brand, but here it comes again in the vanguard of a *musica* nostalgia. *Absolute Beginners*, the film entertainment, is stuffed with the paraphernalia of that nostalgia.

Julien Temple's film based on Colin MacInnes' book is a romance set as stylishly as possible inside an era that was starved of most of what creates today's 'style': money, facility and opportunity. The London that MacInnes cherished was a down-at-heel Bohemia. It's not the stuff that a commercial musical is made of, so Temple has instead built a fantasy out of a 50s coturnopia. Every frame clinks with *retro*uvé bars and puccis: there are *Robin Hood* and *Pinky and Pecky* on TV, magazines and commercials and fashions and records all loudly stamped 1958 (though there's one enjoyable error – at the very start, Colin [Eddie O'Connell] is shown slipping a copy of *Out Of The Cool* back into its sleeve. Recorded in 1960, I'm afraid, but perhaps it's just a sidelong tribute to Gil Evans, who directs the film's music).

Through this jumbled set go Colin and Crepe Suzette (Patsy Kensit), a teenage couple who are both healthily on the make: what they're out to get, of course, is as unclear to them as it is to us. Just to be somebody, or *als*

something. So Colin wanders the Soho precincts with his camera and winds up an image-snapper for youth, and Suzette sells herself into marriage to couturier Henley (Edward Fox), who is conniving with property developers to make a killing in Colin's poor part of town. This sows the seeds for a furious carnage of race riots, brought on by Henley's ugly minders. The tattered teenage romance just about struggles through the surrounding blaze of incident.

Also mixed in are countless minor eccentricities who are themselves all faces in 'our' world: Lionel Blair, Alan Freeman, David Bowie, Sade, Eric Sykes, Sandie Shaw. Temple's cast is a cult by itself, a flash(bulb) flood of personalities. Gil Evans' music isn't exactly the stuff of *Out Of The Cool*: it's a nonstop barrage of rock licks given a jazz gloss by the horn parts. 'The film whirls on, incessantly in motion, song and dance numbers not so much integrated into the text as huddled out of the screen. *Absolute Beginners* has enough energy to exhaust.

AS A SHOT OF MOVIEGOING, IT works well enough. Temple has snared a lot of talent to jam into his project. Patsy Kensit is a vapid Suzette, but O'Connell makes a good debonair guttersnipe as Colin, and the older pros relish their moments of screentime to the point of camp (and well beyond, in the case of Lionel Blair). But there's the dilemma, it's as though everybody has only jigsaw bits to do, with no time to shuffle the pieces into a solid character. In dolling up the bric-a-brac of the film, Temple's tack is to let his cast swagger their own way. Everybody, aside perhaps from Colin, is swallowed in the noise and glare of

the picture.

This is the sort of criticism that was levelled at the film which might be Temple's main inspiration – Francis Ford Coppola's *One From The Heart*. Like Coppola's movie, *Absolute Beginners* is really a fantasy about film, rather than a social slice gone glam. The elaborate lot which the picture was filmed on is close to the little movie kingdom which Coppola built for his romance. The difference is that where *One From The Heart* was an entire tiny world, an enclosed movie valentine, *Absolute Beginners* wants to be about more than the cinema itself. It wears its conscience on its sleeve as noisily as its heart. You may find the crush of musical dream and sour social history confusing.

That said, the climactic riots are very well handled. There's great discomfort invoked by Steven Berkoff's fascist fanatic and Bruce Payne's thug leader: these men are authentically nasty in a way that American movie hoods never quite match, and the frenzy of the street fights is only slightly undercut by choreography that looks like *West Side Story* remade as a promo video. Where the earlier part of the tale looks like a misguided try at modernising a dead genre, in these last scenes Temple's on the verge of creating a whole new thing.

Maybe he's held back by the compromises that ran through the picture: Bowie's amusing but pointless role, Sade's glued-in appearance as a club chanteuse. The film looks like a hit, but safety first: jazz, supposedly the sound and rhythm of the whole piece, hardly gets a real look-in. What's just right is the volume, the speed, the brightness, the pep. It's a young person's film.

Z W E R I N

... opens his mail

EVERY PIECE OF PAPER INVOLVED A decision. I shifted them with neither joy nor efficiency from one side to another, and a pile of indecision grew on the floor until I realized that my desk would never be clean anyway so I might as well try to make something useful out of the mess.

My friend the late Melvin Fishman, may he rest in peace (for his sake somewhere near Peru) once said: "The holes in your Swiss cheese are somebody else's Swiss cheese." Everybody's already bitten into the cheese, the holes are unexplored, and a press release announcing a Gary Burton concert with Steve Swallow on bass opens a perfect hole. Note: "Interview Swallow."

A copy of a proclamation by Le Ministère de la Culture de la République Française naming Memphis Slim "Commandeur de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres", Sort of a Legion of Honour but not quite. The Culture people handed them out like Burger King crowns before the end of their reign in March. But receiver of devaluated currency or not, Memphis Slim cannot complain about the blues. He drives a Rolls, lives in a fancy apartment in the 15th arrondissement, looks wonderful for his 70-old years, still performs like a young trooper. Not a bad story, but the proclamation had been buried there in front of me since December 24th. Old news. Should I file it under "M" or "S"?

A telegram from a woman asking me to call her "urgently" about the "Sam Woodyard affair". I had left a message on her machine. You may think that is poetic license but she returned my call just as I was writing the previous paragraph. Woodyard was Ellington's drummer for many years. He's been living in Paris. Lately he has been in and out of hospitals. Two months ago there was a crowded star-studded benefit for him. The woman said he never got any money from it, that she had been physically aggressed by one of the organizers and had written a letter of protest signed by an impressive list of well-known musicians and entertainers (Woodyard has made many friends in Paris, and having played with Duke Ellington is hard currency here). She promised to mail a copy tomorrow. She said the Agence France Presse is investigating. It sounds like a story with another side to it. Open an active file.

A PRESS RELEASE ABOUT AN AFRICAN band called Ghetto Blaster. In Paris for four

years now, they lived together on a barge anchored behind the Gare d'Austerlitz for awhile. The release enclosed a record, which had remained buried in a pile of its own. I dug it out and put it on. They play a healthy mix of Afro-beat, funk, the blues and the record features Steve Poets on alto saxophone. The release said that African music was going to be the next big pop trend and that it was the root of most other pop music. My first reaction was that while this may be true, it's basically just another "African music" story. I've written three or four of them already. We seem to lump African music together in one story, while each of our own musicians is considered to have his own. Wondering if this wasn't unconscious racism, I decided to interview them after all. It turned out to be just another African music story after all. "Pure African music has not been successful in Europe and America so we are combining it with western styles," they said. The conversation more or less stopped there.

An unread copy of Billboard Magazine. The basic irrelevance, to say nothing of questionable taste, of dividing music by race became dramatically evident once more when I found Whitney Houston and Sade number one and two on both the "top black" and "top pop" album charts. Sade might have been described by Boris Vian as "Jazzistique" - feeling more than substance. She is neither Jerome Kern nor Ella Fitzgerald and her band is not a Swing Report. But her texture is immediately recognizable, friendly, haunting and justifiably rare at the top-of-the-pops. So rare that her success prompted the Steel Pulse Group, a music industry marketing company, to conduct a survey. Published in Billboard, the survey revealed that most of her fans are 27 years old and don't like jazz one whit. The more than soft pop the survey concludes is "the age of record buyers is constantly rising" that contemporary consumers are "more sophisticated than the jazz audience" and that "it might not be a bad idea for record companies to release more of this kind of music."

AN ARTICLE BY MICHAEL ANTONIO, a biographer James Brown called "The November issue of the New Republic, with the thesis that jazz was not ignored by the white establishment of its home country and appreciated first in Europe as the story goes. He cites a highly selective series of examples to prove his point, kind of like saying that because Eddie Murphy is a matinee idol there is no more racism in America.

Ellington and Galloway were making good money as far back as the 30s; their audience was largely white. In the 20s, "whites were hiring jazz pioneers to play for them at the New Orleans Country Club, fraternity dances at Tulane and fancy restaurants like Tranchina's on the lake". When Duke Ellington sailed for England in 1933, "to be, as is now everywhere believed, 'discovered' by English intellectuals, he was sent off by a full page story in *Time* and a sailing party attended by press photographers and the cameras of Movietone News". John Coltrane was making \$500,000 a year at the time of his death in 1967. In the 30s "there was not a single full-time jazz cabaret anywhere in Europe". While jazz was still a "cult music" in Europe, the American mass media were covering it seriously. The idea that (black jazz) was despised and neglected in the United States is "patently false".

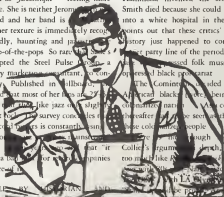
Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Fats Waller and others were household names in America, and were growing rich and famous while playing a good deal of uncompromising jazz."

Historical distortion is the fault of a small group of white "left-wing" writers - Charles Edward Smith and John Hartmann among them - writing largely in the radical press. Hammond invented the story that Bessie Smith died because she could not be admitted into a white hospital in the south. Collier points out that these critics' versions of jazz history just happened to coincide with the party line of the period which was that the oppressed black population made by the oppressed black population.

The Communist Party decided in 1928 that African black people, being treated as a colonized nation, "As a consequence, jazz therefore can be seen as the folk music of these colonized people". "These people are not white enough to present Collier's argument, although the tone is too much like *Black Power* to ignore. It is a little like the Negroes - with "Born In the USA" and "L.A. City Limits" and "The Black Power Movement".

Collier is the only history of jazz I could ever finish, he's a competent journalist, but the one-sided story this article presents has an uncomfortably strong odour of McCarthyism and I don't mean Eugene

A bill from American Express for \$873.00.







MILES

A BIRTHDAY RETROSPECTIVE BY RICHARD COOK
MILES DEWEY DAVIS WAS BORN ON 25 MAY 1926. HE made his first record in April 1945, a pretty 18-year-old boy; at 60, he is the most distinguished master of the contemporary music which he hates to call 'jazz'.

We live in a time when the work of musicians is obsessively documented, even if it's not always well paid for. Davis has been exceptionally well served by his records: it's a body of music which only Ellington can rival, and he had an extra ten years. It tells us of a figure who follows an actor's persona — deeply, painfully private, yet extraordinarily demanding of himself in a public spotlight. The legend of Miles would overwhelm music that wasn't of equal stature — The Prince Of Darkness, the hooded svengali, all that. But the music abides, as well as the magnetism of the little cat that everybody, in the end, seems to like.

Miles has bounced his critics too many times to let any biography or retrospective be much more than a moment's notice: so here, at any rate, is our birthday celebration. Six records for six decades; six personal favourites of this writer's. Six of one. Happy birthday, Miles.

WALKIN'

(Prestige PR 7076)

SOLAR, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS; LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME.

Davis (tr); Davey Schildkraut (as); Horace Silver (p); Perry Heath (b); Kenny Clarke (d). New Jersey, 3 April 1954.

Walkin'; Blue 'N' Boogie.

J.J. Johnson (tb) and Lucky Thompson (tr) replace Schildkraut. New Jersey, 29 April.

THOUGH HE HAD THE TWO BLUE

Note albums behind him, this was Miles' first completely achieved LP as a small

group leader. 1954 turned out to be a ferocious year in the studios, culminating

in the quarrelsome and electric Christmas Eve date with Monk and Milt Jackson, on 3 April, Miles was in a sober mood for 'You Don't Know', but the other two tunes are altogether more spirited. He uses a cap mute instead of the Harmon that later invoked his most affecting tones, and it seemed to bring back the air of bebop – especially in 'Love Me Or Leave Me'. For possibly the last time on record, Miles creates an atmosphere reminiscent of his youthful Savoy days with Bird: trumpet and rhythm section very very close at a very fast tempo, and the music is a constant explosion of sparks suggested by Kenny Clarke's snareshots. Miles soaps at his phrases – there's little variety of shape, because this is the long straight track of bebop, shrouded by his curling accents.

Though Davey Schildkraut is hardly involved at all, he plays remarkably well. Wrongly identified in Ira Gitler's sleeve-note as an 'omithologist', he actually has a soft timbre which resembles Lee Konitz and a similar way of circling round a phrase. His ambitious solo on 'Solar' is bravely run through, a bystander's little triumph.

The reverse of the LP offers the major session. Horace Silver remembers how Miles had asked Lucky Thompson to prepare some material for the date: it all went wrong, and two head arrangements were quickly roughed out, with these bewitching results. It's something like another birth of another cool – small group music with swing and guts as well as a mysterious introspective feel, an emotional opposite to the Blakey-Silver group of the day. Davis, the debonair but inscrutable Johnson, and Thompson, who always possessed a hint of raggedy, made up a perfect front line.

In 'Walkin' Miles takes nine choruses that leave bebop completely behind, a clear organic shape instead of a rota of flourishes; listen in choruses two to four how an idea is sharpened and elaborated. He closes the solo in a way that leaves a clear gap for Johnson to step into – everyone listens. Thompson intensifies the mood with a brusque tapdance that's dramatic in the fashion of Coleman Hawkins, and the

tune winds down from there past a Davis solo and a jarring collective riff. The whole matter is finely measured but presented as instinctive, which it probably was: amazing music.

Dizzy Gillespie's 'Blue 'N' Boogie' presents the same sort of process at a faster tempo, which deepens everybody's part in their own way – Johnson is yet more smooth, Thompson more urgent. Miles dances a little more elegantly. But the funkier stuff comes from Horace Silver and the rest of the rhythm section – if the others are blue, they boogie.

RELAXIN'

(Prestige PR 7129)

IF I WERE A BELL, YOU'RE MY

EVERYTHING, I COULD WRITE A BOOK,

OLEO, IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU;

WOODY'N' YOU

Davis (tr); John Coltrane (tr); Red Garland (p), Paul Chambers (b), Philly Joe Jones (d). New Jersey, 11 May (tracks 5 & 6) & 26 October 1956.

'TIL PLAY IT AND TELL YOU WHAT IT

is later," says Miles in the opening minute here – and it turns out to be 'If I Were A Bell'. This eight-minute performance is one of the classics of the Great Quintet, all

of the group's virtues almost schematically laid out. First, the gauche good humour of the melody is preened by the intimacy of the muted Miles then cut into by his terse improvisations. Coltrane abruptly comes looming up from off-mike and the whole tune moves up a gear in relief, the tenor peeling across the changes. Garland's piano passage disarms all the preceding urgency because it's so precisely mannered – all his solos sound like this, a pretty fountain of single-note lines with maybe some block chords to flesh out the climax. And then the leader reprises the theme and we've been through the trip.

It's become a cliché of criticism to say that the records by this group were not, in fact, that great, that Coltrane is in a state of confusion, and the music suffers from the group's imbalances. But going back to my favourite, *Relaxin'*, seems to make that sort of judgement ludicrous. Time has done nothing to the music. Alchemically, this band has no precedent before or since: five classic LPs were recorded in two marathon sessions, and the sense of living, the breath of the music, is heightened by the studio mutterings by Miles and the occasional technical imperfections. Garland begins 'You're My Everything' with a twinkling line, only to be stopped and ordered to use block chords by Davis. When the trumpeter comes in, he's so close that the first notes seem to needle in the ear, like a whispered secret. There are few studio dates where we're given the chance to, in effect, sit in on a session.

The material represents something of a departure for Miles at the time. Eschewing his customary use of originals, he works through a book of standards, some beautiful tunes – the songful treatment of 'It Could Happen' and 'I Could Write A Book' is one reason why this band developed a following beyond the usual jazz core. 'Oleo' is the most daring track: Rollins' theme is done piecemeal, with players moving in and out and the pulse shouldered by Chambers. John Coltrane plays tumultuously, and is upstaged only by Miles' second solo, a knife edge of contained excitement.

Relaxin' is something the record never does, even if many of the beats are deceptively laconic. Philly Joe is a marvel – he finds a different emphasis, even a different beat to support every solo. One regrets that no proper live recordings by this band exist, but if ever a group played live in a studio, it was this one.

PORGY AND BESS

(CBS 32168)

THE BUZZARD SONG, BESS, YOU IS MY WOMAN NOW; GONE, GONE, GONE, GONE SUMMERTIME, BESS, OH WHERE'S MY BESS, PRAYER (OH DOCTOR JESUS); FISHERMEN, STRAWBERRY AND DEVIL CRAB, MY MAN'S GONE NOW, IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO; HERE COME DE HONEY MAN, I LOVES YOU PORGY, THERE'S A BOAT THAT'S LEAVING SOON FOR NEW YORK

Davis (tr), with orchestra arranged and conducted by Gil Evans. New York, July–August 1958.

A RUSH JOB, LIKE TOO MANY JAZZ

records, and the ensemble is less than note-perfect; but this is a monumental set, the clear peak of the major Davis-Evans collaborations. It's sharper than Miles

Ahead, less ponderous than the overrated *Sketches of Spain*. Gil Evans arranges George Gershwin's music to open and close around the horn solos: there are passages where Miles is called simply to lead an ensemble, others where the orchestra is a blended backdrop for an improvisation and some where a particularly subtle kind of antiphonal response is made manifest.

That's clearest; perhaps, in the humbling 'Prayer (Oh Doctor Jesus)', where Evans arranges a spare but complex orchestration to offset the most bitter trumpet decorations, culminating eventually in a repeated figure that swells into a great brass cry. Davis tumbles down from this crest like a man in pieces. The brass writing is of the utmost ingenuity throughout: Evans has a unique way with the colours afforded by a trombone section, for instance, and the way he sets 'bones and french horns to amplify Miles' line in 'It Ain't Necessarily So' (with a figure that sounds like 'Milestones') is just one from a

deck of arranger's aces.

Evans has a composer's slant on the music: thematic veins are immaculately grafted in, like the solemn chords that recur in "Bess You Is My Woman" and "My Man's Gone Now", and though most of the music is rather stately and sorrowful Evans includes moments of big band joy – like "Gone", a tune even your neighbours must know. Texturally it's all a model of limited resources endlessly varied. The absence of a large sax section keeps away anything mellow, and there's a certain tartness in the sound which keeps sentimentality at bay.

This beautiful writing, nevertheless, is only the concerto backdrop for Miles Davis in complete command. He called it "the hardest record I ever made", and there's certainly no hint of any drop in concentration from the trumpeter. On one level, it's a demonstration of how finely he'd honed his technique. All the high notes have an almost chrome brilliance, the smears and squeezed sounds are always apt, but it's the consistency of the poetic attack which makes his parts so riveting. The way he scoots "Gone" off the ground, over Philly Joe's cymbals, or the heroic pleading of "I Loves You Porgy" – as a playing vehicle (done almost entirely on open trumpet, too) this might be Miles' finest set. In a parallel world at the same moment, Sonny Rollins was creating lyricism of elemental strength. It was an exhilarating time.

LIVE AT THE PLUGGED NICKEL (CBS 88606)

WALKIN', AGITATION, ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET, SO WHAT, THEME, ROUND MIDNIGHT, STELLA BY STARLIGHT, ALL BLUES, YESTERDAYS
Davis (t); Wayne Shorter (tt); Herbie Hancock (p); Ron Carter (b); Tony Williams (d). Plugged Nickel, Chicago, 22–23 December 1965.

A BIG STEP FORWARD, INTO THE



dark. Miles had arrived at this quintet after the adventures of *Kind of Blue*, various live records and groups and a spell in hospital. The music is exhausting, the most draining out of all the records listed here. This club set collects a batch of long performances and the keynote is struck by "Agitation", a tune premiered on the then-new ESP album and the only "original" in this set – agitation is indeed the metre of all the music here.

Besides Miles, the pivot in each performance is Tony Williams. His thrashing cymbals split up the tunes on an emotional gradient, every time some peak of feeling is reached, Williams cools his kit, and it's a signal for change – either within a solo or at its conclusion. But these changes are brought about with criteria different to any Miles had used before. If the

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M I L E S

modal forms of *Kind of Blue* had suggested new melodic freedoms to Miles, something else had brought about a crisis of structure. The presence of Williams, alongside Carter and the ghostly Hancock, almost destroyed form in this Davis band: the shells of "Walkin'" (play this version after the one discussed above – it's another world altogether) and "All Blues" are powdered by the tempos the drummer sets, and his continuous flux establishes a music of jangled nerves.

It's chilling how freely Miles accepted this new milieu for his own playing (and it makes him seem contradictory – Davis always scorned the innovations of Coleman and Co, insisting that they were unlistenable, although his own group are striding towards much the same objective). In "Round Midnight" and "Stella By Starlight" he chews up most of his usual

ballad inflections and, in what are almost unrecognisable developments of the themes, there's a fierceness about his phrases that is far removed from the poetic sadness of yore. These are rambling solos broken up as much by Williams as by his own whims, they exist in a weird state of logic.

Wayne Shorter plays a Cassius-like role, the eloquent, darkening colleague. He has many brilliant things to say, and his logic, though twisted and asymmetrical, is much more clearly grasped. His is a real virtuoso performance because amid what could be chaos to any player he maintains a consistency of speech and invention on all four sides, which means that the mysteries of "Agitation" are no less useful to him than "Stella By Starlight" or the "Theme", where his thoughts are especially glittering.

Plugged Nickel is opaque and difficult and provides a very particular insight into the workings of a Davis concert. The intensity is blistering – a great span of music concentrated down into one performance.

ON THE CORNER

(CBS 65246)

ON THE CORNER, NEW YORK GIRL, THINKIN' ONE THING AND DOIN' ANOTHER, VOTE FOR MILES, BLACK SATIN, ONE AND ONE, HELEN BUTTE, MR FREEDOM X.

Daves (1); Dave Liebman (s, first four tracks); Carlos Garnett (s, s, last four tracks); Beanie Manon (b-d); Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Harold Williams (kyb); John McLaughlin (g); Colin Walcott (star); Mike Henderson (b); Jack DeJohnette (d); Billy Hart (d, perc); Don Alias, Minow (perc); Badol Roy (tabla). New York, 1 & 6 June 1972

THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF HERE.

Miles Davis brother, *On The Corner* is an imprisonment, a black turmoil. The synthesising begun on *In A Silent Way* has its lights turned out by the rhythms of *On The Corner*: bass and hi-hat ostinatos crash on and on and on, while every conceivable polyrhythm from the other percussion cross-crosses over it. The horns decorate in filigree fragments, lines of irrelevant length that have no sweetness, no real melody; eventually you realise that everybody's playing nothing but rhythm, every bleated keyboard chord and wah-wah noodle from Miles' electronically treated trumpet.

In the impenetrable but excitingly vicious "Helen Butte" the music boils over: those base rhythms bubble on for ever, but now Carlos Garnett's tenor swings into the fray and insists on some kind of order. The music of Davis manages to vindicate itself even in this grimmest period of his career: a soloist will summon eloquence at the moment when all tongues sound alien. It happens here, as well as in the gruelling arenas of *Get Up With It*, *Pargana* and *Agharta*; frequently, the soloist is Miles himself.

This is the most maligned of all Davis' music, but it seems that a reevaluation is at last under way (the subject is treated at length in Jack Chambers' *Miles Davis II*, to be reviewed next month). Most jazz ears rejected *On The Corner* as rock nonsense – it still has a following among many rock fans who couldn't stomach, say, ESP – and it certainly requires an act of faith from long-time admirers. It's since been considered as Miles' heaviest shot at making himself into Sly Stone, although even Sly wouldn't use tablas and sitars as Miles does here. The only connection with funk, in fact, comes from the vamping bass patterns, the res-

is a stew of rhythms, as much bayou and Baroque as they are inner city bomb music. The climactic bear figures of "Mr Freedom X" offer up a hypnosis: the lights are still off, but this burnt fusion of Eastern and Western percussion gets awfully close to the transcendence which Californian drug bands courted hopelessly after.

Where is Miles? On side two he's hardly more than a presence. The trumpet is silent for most of the 29.28 of music. On the first side, he interweaves the activity with McLaughlin and the excellent Dave Liebman. Where the long sequence on the reverse is a withering whole, this side is a string of energy bursts and spectral hazes, whether loud or calm, it still never gets light. Teo Macero produced the sound poorly: he might have been good at recording the old Davis bands, but the murk of this studio sound implies he didn't know how to handle this one. And maybe nobody else did, either.

WE WANT MILES

(CBS 88579)

JEAN PIERRE, BACK SEAT BETTY; FAST TRACK, JEAN PIERRE; MY MAN'S GONE NOW, KIX

Davis (1); Bill Evans (tr); Mike Stern (g); Marcus Miller (b); Al Foster (d); Mavis Cineln (perc). New York, 5 July 1981, Boston, 27 June 1981; Tokyo, 4 October 1981.

THE GREAT RETURN IN THE 80S



seemed at first like a misguided visitation by a withering spirit; when Miles came over in 1982 and '83 he sounded distant, covered up by Mike Stern's bloated metal

guitar and the fog of Weather Reported percussion. But the superb concerts by the 1984-85 band have put this music into a clearer context, and while *We Want Miles* is probably inferior to live sets by the group with Irving and Scofield (which must be awaiting release?), it sounds better all the time.

The problem with the music on Davis' 70s recordings, as far as audiences were concerned, was its use of volume and energy to completely private ends. It was as if Davis was trying to plant the lonely secrets of his old music straight into a context where showmanship and extroversion were supposed to make up the pulse – a fascinating exercise, but imprudent as far as most listeners were concerned. In *We Want Miles*, Miles smiles. Joy has seldom played a role in the Davis canon, and this set isn't exactly happy-go-lucky, but it's outgoing in a way that Miles hadn't been for 25 years. He put together a team of hungry young players: Miller is a flapping virtuoso, Foster and Cineln are tireless busybodies and Stern plays loud and importunate (although he sounds better than the loquacious howe

heard at Hammersmith).

The work gathers the most shining power of his later music: instead of the suffocating *Fillmore East* intensity, this band breathe. The tracks are balanced between styles, even between histories; so "My Man's Gone Now" is recomposed as a dead slow funk epic, "Fast Track" taps a stormcloud of War/Ohio Players grooves and "Kix" investigates the possibility of a truly melodic rock-jazz. After all this time Miles could be expected to begin revising his own history, and a set like this makes up notes towards such a revision. His current band is better placed to make new matter out of this direction, but these players have many fine moments – Foster always seems to have extra power in reserve, Evans (heard only on soprano) has some beautiful musings in "My Man's Gone Now".

Miles himself plays a lot of horn. The fiery straggled runs of "Fast Track" seem too effortful to convince totally: he remains at his best as the calm centre of the music, an old lyric man revitalised by new soundings. This isn't particularly tense music, and there are times when it seems Miles is letting his boys walk it away. But listen to the way he cuts off Stern's solo on "Kix", or the imperious return of the mute towards the close of "My Man's Gone Now". In control.

THE MUSINGS OF MILES

I have to change, it's like a curse.

An artist's first responsibility is to himself.

Hell, if you understood everything I said, you'd be me.

You don't mind dull people when you're not dull yourself.

Space music'd be really something. They don't have no gravity. You couldn't have no downbeat.

You're used to that stuff in London. You just dye your hair when it rains. Liven things up a little bit.

I'm not gonna jump up and down so I can play with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra. So what?

There's gotta be some different stuff, man. You can't keep playing *The Barber of Seville*.

A lot of guys are wearing clean shirts and driving new cars from copying me.

I'm basically a quarter horse. You know how a thoroughbred runs a mile? A quarter horse runs a quarter-mile.

STEVE MOORE begins a new series on how to get the best from your records.

I SHOULD THINK THAT, AT ONE TIME or another, you've all flicked through one of the hi-fi mags. What I want to do here is a bit different — I'm not interested in discussing the merits of this amplifier, or that pair of speakers. Not for a bit anyway. Rather what I'd like to do is explain what a hi-fi system is (and should be), show you how it works (and how to get the best out of it) and suggest some ways that you can quickly tell how good the music sounds.

With this information under your belt you should then be able to end up with a better sound at home — whether you're about to buy a system, or you've had one for years. That means that you'll enjoy your records more. By definition.

Yeah?

A hi-fi system is just a tool. Like a hammer. It's best judged by how it does its job, not what it's like itself. You'll want a system to allow you to enjoy the music on your records — with the best system you should respond in almost the same way that you would do if you were listening to the music live.

You've bought your records because you enjoy the music and the way in which it is played. As the system that you listen to improves, you should find the whole sound more enjoyable, and you should understand more about the music and the way in which it is performed. You'll understand the thoughts and intentions of the composer better, and the way in which the musicians interpret this.

You'll begin to feel these things without even trying. That's why all this 'hi-fi' lark is worth it. On less good systems, even if the sound is 'impressive' you'll have to strain to hear what's going on.

You see . . .

WHENEVER YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC — live or recorded — there are two levels of information coming at you: 'music' and 'sound'.

Music is what makes you happy or sad.

It can bring back memories, make you want to cry, or get you dancing. It can also bore you, disappoint you and make you angry. This is why you listen to one guy and not the other. It may be why you buy *Wire* and not *Swash Hats*, or it may be why you buy both.

Sound is different. You can't discuss it in the same way. You can talk *quantitatively* this time. If a piano note is distorted you could compare the sound you hear with the original, and say *how much* it has changed. Sound is to do with the presentation of the music. The two are inextricably linked. If the quality of sound is good you get more from the music. You know what I mean. It's a lot easier to understand some albums on a good record player.

Music is meaningful, emotional and involving. All that meaning and emotion is somehow packed onto the little tiny grooves on a record. It's up to your record player to get it off the disc, down your ears and into your brain in such a way that

almost magical. Decades after Charlie Parker dies, I can sit at home and listen to him blowing out amazing tunes, with a bunch of other guys all doing their own stuff. You can hear *so much* as well — you can listen to some of those old records and hear all sorts of things. Yeah — that little guy blasting away in the background sounds familiar . . . (checks sleeve) . . . Wow! Miles Davis. And so on.

So. How do these hi-fi systems work then? You must all have some sort of system at home, and you'll have heard loads of others. Why do things sound so different? What's going on? You'll find also, that some records vary more than others — why's that?

Well.

The whole process of getting music out of some guy's trumpet and down your ears (never mind that it may be years later) is one long chain. Your brain is the final link. The first link is the person writing, or playing, the tune. Clearly things at the start of the chain matter a lot. If you don't like the music, you'll never like it, no matter how good the system is.

This is especially true at the 'hi-fi' part of the chain. Assuming records for now, you'll have a record player, an amplifier, and a pair of speakers. Which is most important? Well, it's got to be the speakers, hasn't it — that's where the sound comes out. Right?

Wrong.

The speakers are the least important part. All they can do is (at best) faithfully produce what they're fed with. The signal from the amplifier. Same thing here. The amp is

totally dependent on the record player. If this doesn't get any information off the record, and feed this into the system, nothing else will.

This means that at best the amp, and speakers should reveal what they are fed with, without adding any character of their own. There's just one thing though. This assumes that the guys on the record know what they're doing.

I think that's fair enough.



MOORE FINCHER

your feet start tapping.

Believe me, this is difficult stuff.

Imagine scaling your record-player up about 25,000 times (this is about the same scale as an A-Z). Now, at this scale, the information in the groove is read by the stylus (which is about 30 feet high) as movements of about an inch to and fro.

At the same scale the arm is about four miles long.

Try and imagine this system working.

It's incredible that it works at all — it's

WORKING AGAINST THE NORMAL



A dialogue between Biba Kopf, an absolute beginner in the tasks of improvised music, and the saxophonist for whom they are a life's work. Evan talks about freedom, composition, spontaneity and silence . . . and how the manifesto remains the same, after two decades of improvising music.

BIBA KOPF: LET'S BEGIN AT MY POINT of entry as a listener to free music. I was dragged (not exactly kicking and screaming!) by Witte Ed. Richard Cook who used to fire the likes of Peter Breitzmann and yourself at my passions for the emerging erotic noises of Berlin's *Emstörche* Nachhause, Boyd "Non" Rine and others. It was as if he were saying your virtuosity made your music greater, more valid than intuitive music practitioners, dismissing the latter as dilettantes who can't sustain. Any validity in such claims on your behalf?

EVAN PARKER: Well, I can only speak about the tradition that I can easily relate to—where my music comes from. It may be that other correspondences can be made, seen or felt, and they may be at one level true. Perhaps there are acoustic similarities and psychological or motivational differences. I can't say.

The fondest illusion I nurture is that there is some self-sustaining, almost hermetic quality, especially to the solo playing, which now has a life of its own and can feed off itself. It's almost certainly a self-delusion (laughs), but it makes talking about the relationship between what I'm doing and the work of others quite difficult—unless they're people I play with. **BK:** If the music exists hermetically, where does the audience come in?

Well, I'm talking at the level of discipline, creativity, something like that. You fondly like to think that you are the central source of ideas and the maker of meaning in your own work. The person who listens to it makes his or her own meaning. And the fond hope would be that the most accurate listening to your work shares your sense of where it comes from and what it relates to. Yet anybody can listen to it for whatever reason they like. If they can find it. The problem for most people is they won't come across it.

BK: Which accounts for Richard's missionary zeal in busting on the brats, pairing you off with Johnny Rotten in a review for NME . . . (Laughter) . . .

BK: Read in "rock" terms, the intensity of your music might be construed as violent. Do you see it like that?

No, it's meant to be . . . only about the play of acoustical energy, alternations between the

periods of highly energised sound fields and the opposite, something calming. That's one of the polar systems you can use to create tension. Not that these things are necessarily intellectually ordered like that—they come from some impulse deeper than conscious intellect. But if I have to talk about it afterwards it's certainly not to do with anything like aggression. In certain historical phases of the music it may have been something like primal therapy, some cathartic sense of release—through inarticulate sound energy release, but not the release of aggression. At least I don't think so. It's not meant to make people run out into the streets and smash shop windows, if that's what you mean.

It might be designed to make them think why they're not doing that and why some people are, and so on. It's not meant to directly produce some kind of quantified effect. Not at all.

BK: Would you like it if there were some kind of ritual application for free music? If it were more firmly linked to tradition? The richness and vitality of other improvised musics, like flamenco or sitar, would seem to derive from its use value, be it religious or ceremonial (check Derek Bailey's book *Improvisation*), which makes for greater interplay between audience and musician. Free music seems to be cut off from its original traditions, the jazz dances at which might be its source . . .

I think it must be psychologically necessary for the players to believe that the music is either making a new tradition or . . . (pause) . . .

Well, it's impossible to answer that question without talking about the roots of urease within society at large.

Obviously, taken from any angle, society's in a mess. Whichever framework for analysis is used—the Age of Aquarius, the time of Kali Yuga or whatever—most systems of looking at the world agree that things are seriously wrong. The problem is everybody has a different solution, and part of what is wrong is the competition between the various systems that offer themselves as a solution to the problem.

If you start to look at it like that, all of this free music is like fiddling while Rome burns. It's not going to do much to put things right.

In a way it's almost as if one can't afford to dwell on those considerations too much. Of course it would be wonderful if there was a coherent, ordered, just society in which every individual had the possibility for fulfilment and self-expression beyond the obvious needs of a roof over their heads, food in their bellies or a sense of place. At this point in our social history we haven't even got those basics for most people.

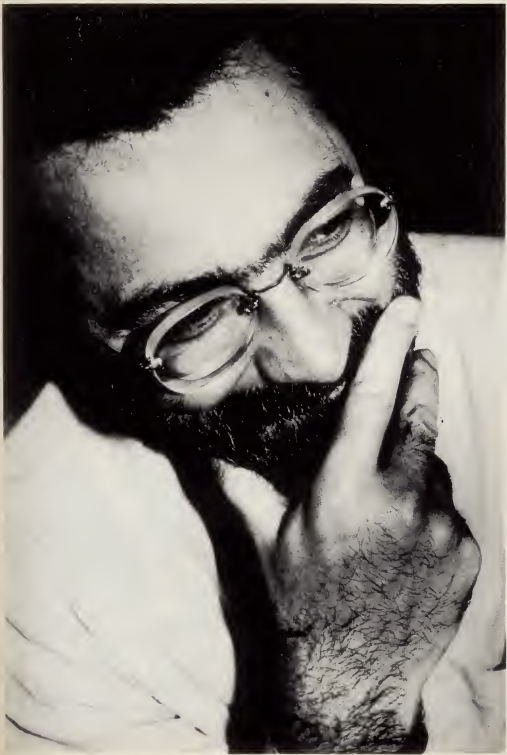
In that sense this music can start to look . . . elitist. That's the word that is often used to describe it, as if the musicians take a pride in the fact it's only listened to by a small number of people. Which I don't think is true. Most players would like more people to listen to and more opportunities to play . . .

And the other feeling, of course, is that it's escapism: it represents a world the musicians disappear into, leaving the rest of the world behind. But I don't think that's true either. Well, the musician undoubtedly does have a sense of escape from the trials and tribulations of this world, in a way, of passing through a curtain to a simpler system where it's just about the flow of energy, the movement of patterns, rhythms, pitches in relation to one another in a playful, joyful way, which is, of course, a model for a better social order. But how do you turn that into a political manifesto? Impossible.

BK: FREE MUSIC COULD BE SAID TO represent for both player and listener a means of circumventing the usual patterns of order—both musical and social—by-passing the networks of distribution and consumption set up to sustain a mass culture which for reasons of rationalisation and profit will only deal within narrow ranges of expression. In this sense free music players and others operating outside the established modes and codes open up possibilities rather than shut them out. Claims to elitism can therefore be immediately declared invalid.

Yes. I said years ago that part of the method is to hear what is considered normal and work against it, to construct a music without those norms. It's made in part as a negative response to that homogenised mass culture . . .

In a way those mass cultural phenomena reveal a commonality between all people, rock



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E V A N P A R K E R

as a global culture, which it is clearly becoming. Maybe it has got some positive sides to it. Where it gets tricky is when you add the global corporations controlling the sale and distribution of the same thing. It's strange to watch bands become through the mediation of global corporations cut off from the neighbourhood which gives them their real meaning.

Maybe our ambitions are the same as everyone else's. Perhaps it's just that we lack the muscle to mediate our music so effectively. But ours is inherently less suitable for that kind of mediation. The money necessary to do the tight kind of job for it is never there – there's always easier, more attractive options available – and so it leaves us doing it for ourselves. Whether that makes ours a more honourable activity I don't know.

BK: *It helps an extraordinary will to keep on. Where does that will spring from?*

From the activity itself – from the energising effect of the music. The stronger and purer the music, the more energy you get from it. There's definitely a feedback between individuals and their perceptions of their playing. You've got these very simple feedback cycles in operation. When you're working the wrong way it is quite hard to crack it. It seems to go in waves. In terms of your confidence and sense of success or failure it may not strictly be a direct consequence of how the stuff sounds. But how you feel about the result may be affected by other factors.

BK: *The economic factor must rear its ugly head every now and again.*

(Laughs) Well I didn't want to put a name on it, but that can be one of them. And, of course, there's this sense of place, this sense of social worth. Again, it's very easy to lose sight of the fact there are people with far more serious problems than yourself, like the long-term unemployed. They would be a much more intense example of the same thing. They've effectively been told they have no social function whatsoever, that they're incapable of a self-determined existence. At least I've made a job for myself, made a sense of purpose for myself.

So, as I said earlier, there are all these other factors that affect considerations of success or failure in a performance that go way beyond what you're actually playing, problems beyond your control. And, you know, there are problems attached to a music where the manifesto we started out with remains our manifesto now. There's no news in our

thinking. That remains more or less the same. The only thing that changes is the actual day-to-day content of the music and sometimes that – if it's not listened to very effectively – can sound as though nothing is changing. Even I can listen to tapes from 10 to 15 years ago and think, well, either what we're doing now hasn't kept moving ahead very well, or, wow, we were doing some incredible stuff for that time. It's only when you listen closely do you realise there's work going on, constant pruning and shaping of how to interact, how to generate those forms, how to maintain interest, a lot of detailed work going on in there which goes beyond anything you can express in a simple manifesto-type statement of intent.

BK: *Richard Cask wanted to ask if you are refining yourself towards silence?*

There's already a copyright on silence!

BK: *Who owns it? Beckett?*

No. I think it's John Cage! No. It's a good question. In some ways you could see it as purging yourself of the need to play and that it's a life's work and it ends when it ends. That's in conflict with the idea of something simple, joyous and celebratory, however, and sounds much more angst-ridden and pathological than it actually is, though there may be elements of that as work, too.

One's dearest wish may be that it's a simple play of acoustic energy, a dance of sound waves, but the truth is also tied up with your own psychology, your own self, your own neuroses.

BK: *Is it your intention to abstract those elements of self from your music, to the interests of its purity?*

I used to think in a much more Zen, John Cage kind of way, that one of the problems to be solved was to remove personality from the music, as if style and habits were the enemy of spontaneity and freedom. Now I don't feel like that so much. Style is just another of those things you juggle with. Anyway, it's impossible for me to operate satisfactorily in that state of no-mind.

BK: *Isn't such a state of no-mind impossible to achieve, anyway, given the proliferation of media transmitters and receivers creating interference?*

I don't know. It might be something more simple, like professionalism, delivering something that is clearly the product of your efforts. And your mental effort is just as much part of the process as the mechanical effort of producing sounds from the instrument and should be presented as such: the combination of mind and body producing the work to offer

to people in the hope they can take something from it. It's the same as someone who develops a skill and offers his or her service to the community. If they do a good job people respond. That sounds very naive, but for that reason mind comes back into it.

My desire to survive as a professional musician made me decide that no-mind was too exotic a place to try to operate in. No-mind, no sense of self and want to be paid for giving a performance? Which I did seem to want. I didn't want to take on a normal job to earn a living. It's a matter of resolving that contradiction.

BK: *DO YOU MAKE A LIVING SOLELY from playing?*

I do a small but useful amount of teaching. I've been doing some teaching at Leicester Polytechnic for Gavin Bryars (the composer who in the 60s worked in the experimental/improvisational trio Joseph Holbrooke with Derek Bailey and Tony Oxley). He's a very enlightened employer. I mean, he understands that very often my teaching will consist of explaining the impossibility of teaching improvising. There'd be some playing, some rambling speculations about this or that, which wouldn't really be of much help to anybody who didn't already have much sense of the activity being possible. But to have a sense of free improvising being possible is the most important conceptual breakthrough. After that it's just a question of time and effort, learning the instrument and learning yourself.

BK: *Isn't your unravelling your employer's work as a teacher of composition?*

I've never had that feeling. Anyway it's the tradition of liberal education that you should be exposed to different points of view as a student and arrive at your own judgement. If Gavin felt there was something inherently consequential about my ideas, then the best way for the students to see that would be to have them deal with me. But I don't think Gavin feels that.

BK: *Wasn't there a point when Gavin Bryars came out against improvisation?*

Only for himself, yeah. And a lot of the things he had to say about his position were very interesting, like not being able to separate the performer from the work could be seen as a strength or weakness. I'd prefer to see it as a strength and Gavin as a kind of weakness.

Now in moments of vulnerability I'd agree



DEREK BAILEY
NOTES

(Incus 48)

Recorded London, April/July 1985

K. Sauting, From And Sixes, Notable, Nating, Speculation, Old Style: H3, An Update On 38, Yastar, Exhaustive
Bailey (g)DEREK BAILEY AND EVAN PARKER
COMPATIBLES

(Incus 50)

Recorded London, 22 April/27 July 1985.

Incus: The Better Of Coexistence, Vase Parus, Peter Riley, In Memoriam: Laureot Goldart, NYC-E+K
Parker (ss, tt), Bailey (g).EVAN PARKER
THE SNAKE DECIDES

(Incus 49)

Recorded Oxford, 30 January 1986

The Snake Decides, Leapfrog Fully, Barroder i Aus, Haters' Last Yaps
Parker (ss)COMPANY
TRIOS

(Incus 51)

Recorded London, 24-28 May 1985

Tree-Gee, Tree-Ten, Tree-Three, Tree-Four Tree-Five, Tree-Miss One Tree-Ten
Voids Globular (rb ss 1-4, 7) J D Parman (tt, f) or 2, 7; Evan Parker (tt, ss) or 1, 5, 7; Hugh Davies (clarinet) or 1, 5, 7; Derek Bailey (g) or 2, 3, 6, 7
Ernst Reijger (drum) 1, 6, 7; Jodie Lussdale (rb ss 1-2, 5); James Murre (perc) or 4-7

AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME, A HALF-century cracked and the weight of history and its documents bearing down, the directors of Incus beat poetry by refusing to take stock they march on to the next stage. Milestones are cues for nostalgia, but for Incus 48-51 Parker and Bailey show how far they can still go, not how far they've already gone.

Each record in this bundle has different intensities and rewards. The most overpowering is *The Snake Decides* because the molecules of Evan's solo music are agitated without relief. The massive title track is a nonstop barrage of lines which inches very gradually away from the most extreme intensity down to, well, considerable intensity. The very first sound strikes like a physical blow (he is superbly recorded by Michael Gerzon) - this opening passage is a new accent even for Parker, and although by the end he is recomposing techniques we might remember from *Monsters* or *Six Of One*, it's easy to perceive the wide changes in Parker's manner. He is far less private than before, less bashful of enveloping directions in techniques; and the technique here, the cross-ply of fingertips and tonguing, will stagger anyone who's tried to play a saxophone. Three shorter pieces are like splinters from the long moment - and all are, of course, just moments from the work in motion. In that way, all such solid achievement is also transitional - rantalising hints of the next stage.

The title of *Compatibles* is a bit of a chuckle. Both Parker and Bailey have been at pains to avoid routine cross talk. Ten years on from *The Loudon Concert*, what's changed? It would be scandalous for me to suggest that their conversations have 'mellowed', but it's not wrong to suggest that they've refined the dialogue back towards a more recognisable speak-and-respond method. When Derek plucks a particular discord, Evan may well tie its tail with the saxophone. Their music together in 1975 had them almost obsessively distanced from each other, two darkly independent parts that attracted like polar opposites, now these parts are wrapped closer.

Extraordinary thing is, they've done it without diluting one whit of their own methods. "The Bones Of Contention" gnarls some of Parker's most melodic soprano through the brittle twigs of Bailey's barren chords – charming, and hard as nails. There looks like no end to the piece, but when the finish arrives you realise you heard it coming five minutes back. Something like that.

In Bailey's own solo record, one might expect another clear change, as well as no change. His antipathy towards solo improvisation can result in a rather sour insistence on squeezing certain materials dry: so you'll hear, in "Speculations, Old Style", a slow hammerdown of a single shape. Nothing's developed here: it's left alone once the diagram's completed. But a pattern holds, and it's an equilibrium that persists elsewhere here, so his suggestion to me (half-serious, I guess) that *Notes* be called *Études* in another timespace makes an avuncular sense. As in *Compartibles*, we can detect a certain relinquishing of abstraction: rhythmically, some of the pieces nearly dance. Tonally, they're pancakes. Consistently, they're the stuff of still-new language. A title note: "83" refers to Steve Lacy's composition "38", a reflection on being that age. You DB will have his joke.

Two, because a two is (according to DB) perhaps the ideal number for improvising. Too much yin and yang with two, starts to get crowded when there's four or more. These Company '83 recordings are all trios but the last two: the finale has everybody piling in, making a great sea monster booming and rasping in the deep. There are other monsters present, too: "One" roars in woe, bass and brass going right down the throat, before shading down into the smallest muttering. And then it slides back up again. "Two" is scampering fluff, DB as himself and Joelle Leandre as mad Ophelia. Why is that 15 minutes long and "Three" only two?

There's no answer to those questions because, like swing, if you have to ask. Company has become something of a difficulty for Incus. Nearly every edition of Bailey's fluctuating improvisers' troupe has been recorded, and weeks of tape exist. Out of these four episodes of Incus, the Company set is the most 'past' (everything on record is past, of course, but some are more present than others). The occasions of Company provide the most genuine of improvised events, by their casual-but-serious nature, and they're the hardest to keep timeless. I will probably play *Snake Denies* in 1995 and it'll work, but I'm not sure about *Two*; and yet, today, it's volatile and truthful to a moment. It's a different, less considered skin.

Four steps forward. Richard Cook

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(Coda New Age/Landscape series NAGE 1)
Emily, Steven, The Trick, Post Hypnotic Suggestion, Candelilla's Last Waltz, Transitive, Atmosphere Condition, Final Cruise, Free Fall, Whale.
 Themis (gtrs, synth, bs, p, percussion, quantec vocal harmonies), with: Godfrey Wang (kybd); Tony Beard (dl), Felix Kish (b), Cosmo Sklaris (b); Anne Themis (quantec vocal harmonies), Paul Carmichael (bgrtr); Gary Husband (dl); Peter Adams (kybd); Andy Strenner (kybd); bass arranged by Themis; (collective personnel)

TOM NEWMAN

Bayou Moon

(Coda New Age/Landscape series NAGE 7)
Concerto de Maquis in E Major, Straw Dogs, Gumbo Flang I, Fortrades Descending the Missouri, Gumbo Flang II, Missouri, Voodoo de Bayou, Gumbo Flang III, Alligator Walk, Gumbo Flang IV.
 Written, played recorded and produced by Tom Newman

TIM CROSS

Classic Landscape

(Coda New Age/Landscape series NAGE 3)
 J. S. Bach: *Koonst, für Tackler, Helft Mir Klagen*, from *The St Matthew Passion*, W. A. Mozart: *Symphony No 41 in C Major K331*, "Jupiter", 3rd Movement, Ludwig van Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No 4 in G Major op 58, 2nd Movement*, Tim Cross, *Pastorale*, J. S. Bach: *Brandenburg Concerto No 4 in G Major*, Franz Schubert: *An der Musik, Opus 88 No 4*, Edward Elgar: *Enigma Variations, No 9 "Nursery"*, Opus 36
 Tim Cross (all instruments), Claire Hamill (voc "Kommte, ihr Töchter")

DASHIELL RAE

Songs Without Words- Piano Solos

(Coda New Age/Landscape series NAGE 4)
 Recorded: London, November 13, 14, 15 1985
The Butterfly, The River, The Parting, Song for Myself, Liberator, Eric Lule, Endowment, Odyssende, Travelling Song, Erikine Nacturne, Passage, Song for the Changing Heart
 Dashiehl Rae (p)

STEPHEN CAUDEL

Wine Dark Sea

(Coda New Age/Landscape series NAGE 6)
 Wine Dark Sea Part 1: *The Outward Journey*, Wine Dark Sea 2: *The Return Journey*
 Stephen Caudel (gtrs, kybd, b)

TOM NEWMAN

Aspects

(Coda New Age/Landscape series)
Beach Scene, The Tower of Babel, The Stonecutter's Yard, The Fighting Taverners, The Robbery Venus, Stonecutter, The Dream, Sunrise and Delilah
 Written, played and produced by Tom Newman.

REVOLUTIONS IN MUSIC ARE ALMOST revolutions in audience. Or, better revolutions in the relation of hearers to performers and work. A week or so spent with *The Ring* won't turn you into a Nazi, but by the time it's over your unconscious will be stronger and more pliable than your intellect and you'll know your concert hall neighbour better than your father or your wife: the Nazis quickly saw the potential in that. The point – a small one – of Satre's "Vexations" was the disruption of the concert hour. Cage's "4'33" didn't just

demonstrate the impossibility of silence, it shifted the centre of gravity back from composers and players to (no longer passive) listeners.

What then of "New Age Music"? The promise here seems to be a producer you can play while you lead your life. "Listening" seems almost beside the point; "hearing" is more or less all that's required. Unlike the "ambience music" created by people like Brian Eno, this makes no attempt to become part of its environment, draws no attention to itself except as 'product'. New Age Music, as proponents constantly explain, goes with a lifestyle, young, urban, upwardly mobile, credit cards, high tech conversions. It's the musical equivalent of clothes from Next, a system of infinitely transposable and interchangeable parts, none ever clashing. Or, it's the musical equivalent of a Model T – any colour you like, so long as it's black.

Marketing strategies apart, it's fairly easy to locate NAM musically. It falls somewhere between "Easy Listening" (that old bugbear) and its slightly more upmarket cousin, "Instrumental", the prettier end of the classical record shop where all the unclassifiable stuff goes, all the things that have no generic or formal name beyond "tone poem": *I Pini Romani, The Planet, Enigma Variations*. Programme music is unfashionable these days and such pieces, however excellent, have always been soft targets, unhindered by expectations of form, usually only sustained by a set of more or less literary associations (The Coda albums come littered with little tags of verse, of the type generally found on greetings cards.)

When music is under either formal or extrinsic economic and social pressure it seeks out attachments with other forms and the essence of NAM is always other than strictly in the music itself, "evocation" is the buzz-word. Tom Newman's *Aspects* is intended to accompany a series of short videos; *Bayou Moon* is a set of sound pictures of the Mississippi Delta and the Everglades. Stephen Caudel dips into the *Dictionary of Classical Quotations* – just how many "musical odysseys" have been put on record over the years? John Themis, more abstractly, gets closest to Coda's avowed intention, following "the classical traditions of being able to evoke atmosphere and emotions through the playing of instruments", a definition that would only work for about 30% of the classical canon and that in any case sounds alarmingly like a page from the Muzak Corporation's psyops manual.

It was always a good comedy stock to have the inept lower choicer "Ride of the Valkyries" or a German oompah band to get his girlfriend "in the mood". The idea of "mood music" is a powerful one, to which we've all become, however protestingly, attuned. New Age Music is quite clearly aimed to soothe (nerves and pretensions) and, above all, not to intrude.

It's perfectly possible to walk out of the room during *Pierrot Lunaire*, but that's likely to be a conscious gesture of shock or dismay. It's all too possible to walk out on Dashiell Rae's *Songs Without Words*, as I did, quite simply because you forgot they were on.

I've nothing against ballet: a diet of unrelieved fire and fibre and *Pierrot Lunaire* would drive you mad. The desperate thing about New Age Music is its insistence on its own importance. Those pretensions that are being soothed are the same that accept the advertising equation of Beethoven and lager or perfume, Dvorak and brown bread. Already, NAM exponents are issuing potteries suits; in the last month I've heard Glass'n Reich, Holst, Elgar, Eno, Jah Wobble (the *Bedroom Lounge* specifically, because it "takes you on a journey") and Mike Oldfield all mooned as antecedents. Most dazzlingly arrogant of this set (though "Concerto De Mingo In E Major" is pretty good) is Tim Cross's *Classic Landscape* which soups together Elgar's "Nimrod", Mozart, Beethoven, J.S. Bach and Schubert with his own "Pastorale", a tune of almost unbelievable banality.

There's no redeeming Walter Carlos camp about this. It's all cleverly programmed to sound as near as possible to the real, orchestral article, there's even a cod tune-up at the start of "Brandenburg", brought to order by a couple of raps from the "conductor's" baron. Heard, as it's maybe meant to be heard, from the kitchen, it sounds remarkably like Bach; close to, it's a horrid legato mush without a hint of instrumental character or expression.

New Age Music will probably only finally be understood as a function of the kind of people who'll buy it. Doubtless in armfuls. Pernicious nonsense like O is easily damned, on aesthetic and moral grounds. But New Age music is both determinedly uncontroversial and insidiously parasitic, drawing close to the great and good, borrowing a protective shine of seriousness (Knock Cross and you seem to be knocking Bach and Elgar, and on what grounds? That from your kitchen sink it sounds just like the real thing? As music leeches more and more into the landscape it gradually leeches away whatever it is less us discriminate. Sane wanted "Furniture Music", which for its time was a fine, radical idea. This, though, isn't even wallpaper, but air fresher.

Brian Morton

ERROLL GARNER

The Complete Savoy Sessions, Volume 2 (Savoy WL 705+2)

Recorded: Los Angeles, 2 February / 29 March / 20 June 1949

All The Things You Are, Ghost Of A Chance, Stroup's In The Sway, Yesterday, Goodbye A Cottage For Sale, I'm In The Mood For Love, I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me, More Than You Know: Undiscovered, Red Sails In The Sunset, All Of Me, Over The Rainbow, I Remember Dear - I Only Have Eyes For You.

Garner (p); John Simmons (b); Alvin Stoller or Jesse Price (d).

I HAVE THIS PROBLEM . . . EVERY TIME I hear Erroll Garner I visualise Chico Marx. This difficulty has been with me for years, not helped by the recent re-run of his *Jazz 625* programme. Nor is it an entirely visual hallucination – aural echoes emerge through a number of these tracks.



I know Garner is widely regarded as a 'great' jazz pianist, and this album contains quite a lot of the material on which this reputation began to be based. I think though that some of Garner's early champions were those who found in him a then young musician who wasn't playing bebop, though occasionally to be found in 'modern' company, a sort of Trojan Horse in the schismatic warfare which then existed.

Whilst I can acknowledge his undoubted recognisability, and therefore his originality, I find his music owes too much to the cocktail lounge, to such as Eddie Duchan and Carmen Cavallero, and to the vaudeville stage, ever to convince me that it has real substance beneath its surface gloss. Certainly his music seemed not to change much over the years, except to acquire even more polish, but maybe I'm missing something.

In any case I guess most of us know what he sounds like, what he does and how he does it, and can make our choices about the album, which does have the advantage of furnishing part of a coherent reissue programme of his Savoy recordings.

Jack Cooke

ZOE ZAWINUL

Dialects (CBS 26813)

Recorded: Pasadena, 1985.

The Harriet, Waiting For The Rain, Zanzibar, The Great Escape, Carnation, 6 A.M., Walking On The Nile, Poets.

Zawinul (syn), Bobby McFerrin, Carl Anderson, Dee Dee Bellison, Albie Silas (v).

I MUST HAVE SPENT WHOLE DAYS travelling through the magic forests of Sweetnighter and Mysterious Traveller, records that were like brilliant beacons of invention in the fusion narthouse of the mid-70s. That Zawinul never regained that superlative touch

over the length of a whole LP was the disappointment of the rest of Weather Report's history. Even with Shorter gone, he's determined to carry the band on – but first, this solo travelogue, a "global celebration" of a seasoned traveller.

I'm weary to my bones with the bullying of electronic drums, and Zawinul's propulsion here comes from rhythm tracks that yield to nothing. "Waiting For The Train", for instance, banks fast keyboard charts over the beat, plus myriad trills and the ersatz tribal voices which boom through the record, but the whole thing really goes nowhere. "Zeebop", ostensibly a development of an old Report tune, is a damn headache. Most of the music here is like that, in varying degrees of loud and quiet – the customary sporbail runs on synth that are meant to displace real improvisations, plus other stuff. McFerrin is reduced to sounding like an inebriate computer, his voiceovers, all of which are variations on the shouts of "Nubian Sundance", are mostly electronically garbled.

Zawinul was good with pastels. You may remember the exquisite measure of "American Tango". Here, in "The Great Empire", he gets near it, though not very near. I don't understand *Dialects*. Like Charlie Citrine, I'm a city boy myself.

Richard Cook

CARLA BLEY WITH STEVE SWALLOW NIGHT-GLO (WATT/60)

Recorded: Jun.-Aug. 1985, Greg Kild Studio, NY.
Preced: You're In Love, Night-glo, Rar, Crazy With You, Wildlife, Horn, Pass Without Claws, Sex With Birds

Serve Swallow (b); Carla Bley (org, synth), Larry Willis (p, tp), Haram Bullock (tp), Victor Lewis (dl), Manola Baderna (perc), with Paul McCandless (sax, cor, ss, ts, bar, s, bcl), Randy Brecker (tr, flghn), John Clark (fr b), Tom Malone (rb), David Taylor (bass rb)

OVER THE YEARS, THE WOMAN'S taste for blaring wildness has pulled in on itself, through madcap to funny, and down into warty. No traces today of the squalling or worldwide raggedness that tumbled down *Escalator* or through the songs she arranged for the Liberation Music Orchestra. This is small-scale music, folded in on itself, gentle and delicate (considering the number of participants) but she hasn't stropped being disreputable, just found new ways into it. For these soft-core titles she trips out a kind of soft-core Latin jazz, sailing as close as she can (in "Preced . . .") to the shimmering shores of Herb Alpert. It's played too close to be cruel satire, the joke's private and affectionate, and we're to be the butt of it when we think her gone bland and degenerate. (And maybe it's only the weight of her history of naughtiness that tips the wink.)

Swallow's reverie of absent-minded bass playing is at the heart of the sadness, throughout, but particularly in "Rut": Bley's horn-parts are almost comic in their careful

arithmetic and unobtrusive colouring.

"Wildlife" is the only song that allows a trace of uncomposed noise, things that wind and chatter and hiss on the margins of the triptych. The three sections hinge round Paul McCandless' oboe: it doesn't raise its voice, but delivers a gentle rocking song that holds, however briefly, the fauna at bay, before "Sex With Birds" dissolves completely into cicadas and rustle of exotic percussion.

It's well known that the girls who check teeth and chew gum in the back row are God's chosen. She may be less vocal than before, but she knows what she's at.

Mark Sinker

MILT BERNHART

MODERN BRASS

(RCA NL 45662)

Recorded: Los Angeles, 4 March 1955

The Horns-1; Lavender-1; What Is There To Say-2; Tangorin-2

Roger Milton, Ray Linn (tr); Bernhart (tb); John Graas (fhr), Jack Marshall (g), Ray Siegel (rbo); Maynard Ferguson (trp); Keith Mitchell (b); Irv Kluger (d); Jimmy Guiffre (arr-1); Wes Hensel (arr-2)

Recorded: Los Angeles, 6 March 1955

Save Your Chefs-3; London In July-4; Anew Flanagan-4

Pete Candoli (tr, arr-3) replaces Linn, Pete Rugolo (arr-4).

Recorded: Los Angeles, 8 March 1955

It's Alright with Me-5; Hillside-6; Looking For A Boy-6; Honey For Hollywood-5; Southern Comfort-3; Paul Sarmiento (rba); Irv Cottler (d) replace Siegel, Kluger, Shony Rogers (arr-5); André Previn (arr-6)

BRASS, PIANOLESS RHYTHM AND

some lashes of guitar commingle here, with french horn, euphonium and tuba giving some unusual shadings to the ensemble. Bernhart's post-J. J. trombone is naturally prominent at many points, yet everyone receives good chances, including the arrangers (who also composed several of these pieces). All sorts of tricky passages are deftly negotiated, always with a smooth, full tone. This needs saying because whereas the other important musicians here possess secure reputations Bernhart is largely forgotten. Try him on Guiffre's ingeniously scored "The Horns" and "Lavender".

The tracks are short, one could have done with a more sustained development of fewer ideas, but even in 1955 the three-minute-78-rpm-side mentality still dominated in jazz recording. Everything is beautifully played by these finely balanced yet consistently swinging ensembles, excellently recorded for the period, and many individual felicities deserve comment. Among them are the unexpected climax Hensel obtains by extending the melody of "What Is There To Say", the atmosphere Rugolo draws from another Vernon Duke melody, the bazy "London In July", and the bracing asstringency Previn brings to "Looking For A Boy", a Gershwin song little used by jazz musicians. In fact imaginative writing abounds, in Rogers' treatment of the unpromising "Hooray For

Hollywood" or in Previn's "Hillside", for example. And there are good solos, as by Graas on "Tangerine" or Linn on "What Is There To Say".

Max Harrison

BUD POWELL

BUD! THE AMAZING BUD POWELL

VOL. 3

(Blue Note BST 81571)

Recorded: New York, 1957.

*Some Soul, Blue Pearl, Frantic Fancies, Bud On Bach, Kojin' In The Groove, *Idaho, *Don't Blame Me,*

**Moose The Mooche*

Powell (tp), Paul Chambers (b), Art Taylor (d);

*Curtis Fuller (trb)

POWELL COMES OUT OF THE

shadows for this one, however briefly. There are few of the agonies that mark its predecessors and few tokens of personal disaster. In evidence, too, are the familiar grunts and shouts as Powell tries to reconcile the line emerging on the keyboard with the ideal song in his head. The result is not necessarily Bud at his best, but certainly at his greatest ease.

On his solos, he seems content to stay close to the melody and to dam the flow of ideas with sudden shifts of tempo, shifts Chambers and Taylor seem able to follow, if not to anticipate. On "Some Soul" he collapses the blues chorus with a sudden dramatic compression and lifts the opener out of any hint of predictability, in the process banking up a weight of melodic and harmonic ideas that are implied but not expressed.



"Bud On Bach" (a jazzed version, he says, of "Solfeggietto") is something of an oddity.

Unaccompanied, brief, slightly perverse, and, for a moment, a hint of hysteria lapsing up under the technical virtuosity and orderly progression. The shadows are never far away. They return briefly in "Moose The Mooche", one of the more lugubrious, in sound and association, of the bebop standards.

Here, and on the whole second side, Powell adds trombonist Fuller to the line-up. The extra sound and the long slurring notes allow him more room for manoeuvre across the rhythm and Powell's solos take unexpected angles of attack, criss-crossing the harmonies established by the horn, almost as if Fuller were the pianist and Powell the horn-man. Sadly, the material isn't that strong and the side only starts to move with "Moose".

Fuller, as he showed on *Blue Train*, has an excellent sense of the dramatic and puts it to

full use against Chambers's heavyweight bass. Together, like a pair of linebackers, they build cover for Powell's camouflaged runs.

Not a classic set, but certainly one of Powell's more readable and accessible. He emerges as a player more closely bound to the earlier traditions of Tatum and Waller than is usually thought, more and more of a traditionalist as the need for catharsis recedes. Powell was never entirely at peace with either himself or music. Everything he did was a strange compromise of pressures and forces. It was "amazing" that he managed or chose to continue playing. What he left is one of the most telling legacies in jazz, a vindication of its strengths and subtleties, a condemnation of all its paradoxical demands.

Brian Morton

BILL EVANS

THE ALTERNATIVE MAN

(Blue Note BT 85111)

No recording details

The Alternative Man, The Path Of Least Resistance: Let The Jaws Loose, Gardener's Garden: Surreal Of The Future: Japs, The Cry In Her Eyes: Miles Away, Flight Of The Falcon.

Musicians (full details not given): Bill Evans, Manolo Badrena, Hiram Bullock, Clifford Carter; Mark Egan, Mitchell Forman; Al Foster; Jeff Golub; Danny Gottlieb; Dave Hart; Chuck Loeb; Sid McGinnis; John McLaughlin; Lew Solof.

SHANKAR/CAROLINE

THE EPIDEMIC

(ECM 1308)

Recorded: Snickweek Studios, New York City, February 1985

Never Took No For an Answer, What Would I Do Without You, Situations, You Don't Love Me Anymore, You Can Be Anything, No Care, Don't I Know You, Give An Inch: Fall Moon.

Steve Vai (g); Gilbert Kaufman (syn), Percy Jones (b), Shankar (v), 10-string double vn, syn, d machine; Caroline (v, syn, perc).

HMMM, NOT SURE QUITE WHAT

either of these records is doing on its respective label, except as a possible break from a suffocating image of "good taste", which might by rights exclude them from *Wire* altogether. But both Evans and Shankar have contributed respectably in the past to certain areas of jazz, and there are artistic strategies behind their apparent slumming, even if they can't really be said to work.

Shankar and Steve Vai have been held up (by Bill Laswell) as examples of open-eared musicians who would bring their particular disciplines together into a new and wide-ranging world music. *The Epidemic* is not an impressive strand of *Collision* mainly because none of the participants stamp their mark on the music, so that the rhythms are very rock-square, the harmonies are tritely saccharine, and the words to the songs lamentable. Vai's violently crisp guitar playing, and Shankar's (scarcely featured) violin bend it briefly towards unbinged metal, or Indian-electricity, but even when they start to pull apart a few clichés on side two the targets of their artless and cheeky deconstruction work just aren't substantial enough.



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1. WHICH MEMBER OF WEATHER REPORT WROTE THE SOUL-JAZZ STANDARD "MERCY MERCY MERCY"?
2. NAME THE ORIGINAL BASS PLAYER IN THE BAND
3. WHAT WAS THE TITLE OF THE LP THE BAND RELEASED IN 1985?



Don't forget to include your name and address on the card. Answers and winners will be listed in a future issue. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

McLaughlin worked with Shankar for a while in Shakti, probably the only time when his absurd hand-speed-record guitar style worked to any substantial effect. His contributions to Evans' record, on "Survival" and "Flight", are as entertaining and as silly as ever, in that his ridiculous facility quite wipes away all possibility of taking him seriously. Actually this is very suitable to a record that is generally pretty jolly, even if there's a feeling that Evans was aiming for something rather more ambitious, and simply got caught up in the fun of a less demanding music. There are ghostly echoes here of Shannon Jackson's Decoding detonations of funk (I've been killing myself trying to recall where in *Harmolody* the tune of "Jojo" first appeared); but the rhythm section (Foster and Miller, presumably) have got carried away by the joke, and none of the writing pulls them back into any kind of damaging attack on rock or rock-fusion, or jazz-fusion. Only Evans' own solo contributions rise above the minor pretentiousness and backslapping, but they're hardly lacerating, and they don't occur often enough. When he knuckles down to something more resting, maybe. . .

Mark Sinker

COOTIE WILLIAMS

(COOTIE IN THE FI)

(RCA Jazz Line N1, 98811)

Recorded New York, 29 March / 15 May / 10 July 1957.

Rocky Dots, Blue Rock, Available Lovers, Reasonable Williams (ti), Rupert Cole (as), George Clark (ts), Leroy Lovett (p), Larry Dale (g), Ed Frazier (b), Lester Jenkins (d).

Recorded New York, 5 March / 25 March 18 April 1958.

If I Could Be With You, Canyon Contrasts, New Concept For Cootie, Air Mail Special, My Old Flame, You Forget You're Love, Just In Time, Sweetest Rodeo Drive, On The Street Where You Live, I'll See You In My Dreams, Nevertheless (I'm In Love With You)

Williams (ti), Billy Byers, Bobby Byers, Richard Hixon, Chauncey Welch (ts), Phil Bodner, Flynn Frazer, Boone Richmond, Romeo Penner, Nick Calzavara or Sean Welch (bass), Lou Stein or Hank Jones or Henry Roland (p), George Barnes or Tony Mottola or Barry Galbraith (g), Fadiel Safirani (b), Don Lamond or Ossie Johnson (d).

THE BIG BAND TRACKS FROM 1958

constituted the original format of this album, whose title is redolent of the mid-to-late 1950s when any musician of any moment—including some who were very momentary indeed—appeared showcased "Hi-Fi". Billy Byers' arrangements, for trombones, saxes and rhythm, contrive to force Williams into the foreground quite successfully, and maintain the trumpeter in solitary isolation yet within his most valid and familiar habitat. While essentially workmanlike rather than inspired, the writing demonstrates respect for and understanding of the tradition that bred it.

Williams' trumpet growls and blasts,

waits and sings through this congenial setting, timing and phrasing and dynamics all demonstrating the flexibility and elegance of which he was capable. Who can blame him for pulling all the stops out? The four tracks added here (to what must have been originally a pretty short-weight album) give an indication of what he'd escaped from, even if only



temporarily at the time. When Williams' big band folded in the later 1940s he was at the mercy of music-biz economics, and survived by fronting a plodding r&b group within which his own talent was irrelevant and even rather embarrassing. These items are described as the most jazz-orientated of the band's output, and frankly make me glad not to know about the rest. But the bulk of this album is enjoyable and has worn quite well.

Jack Cooke

CEDAR WALTON QUARTET

(BLUEBILLY TIME)

(Criss Cross Jazz 1017)

Recorded Monster, 21 April 1985

Robberman, Nanna, Bluebilly, I Remember Clifford, Gyo De Gyo, Dale Barlow (ts), Walton (p), David Williams (b), Billy Higgins (d).

WALTON'S REP IS CAPITAL-LETTER musician—the sort of pianist every cut wants in their band, because he knows every chord, each turnaround, has an eloquent fill at every moment and a touch you could count feathers with. As a result, maybe, he's not all that exciting to listen to: but this outing has some excellent guts in the form of Dale Barlow.

Barlow is a young Australian tenorman with a terrific air of authority. He comes broadly out of the usual Rollins-Coltrane lineage without any slavish imitations, and if we've heard a lot of these licks before they're delivered with a vibrant freshness. The outstanding moments come in "Nanna"—this is a sunny rendition where Barlow shines over the angularities of Trane's style and comes up with a reading different to anybody's. Where, in Walton's opening solo, a mood of acquiescence is set up, Barlow manages to make the music harder without hanging it to pieces. His solo has a pessimistic minor streak that a crying tone carries off ideally, and the buoyancy of the rhythm section soaps grimness creeping in,

Elsewhere there's a neat Walton original in "Ops", some politely funky business in "Bluesville" and a dreamy turn through "I Remember Clifford". Walton must have played this tune often, and his own thinking is glib, but Barlow is altogether more pointed. Very worthwhile, with the bonus of Billy Higgins at his most stirring throughout.

Richard Cook

STEVE COLEMAN GROUP

(MOTHER AND PULSE)

(JMT B50001)

Recorded New York, March 1985

Hearts Blue, Another Level, God Be With You, Wagon Wheel, No Good Two Faces, On The Way, The Glue Was In The Rock, Motherland Pulse
Steve Coleman (as), Gen Allen (p), Lonnie Placido (b), Marvin "Smitty" Smith (d, perc.). With Cassandra Wilson (v), Graham Haynes (r), and Mark Johnson (d) on "No Good Two Faces".

CASSANDRA WILSON

(POINT OF VIEW)

(JMT B50004)

Recorded Brooklyn, New York, December 1985
Square Roots, Blue Is Green, Never, Desperate Men, Love And Hate, I Am Writing, I Wishful On The Moon, I Thought You Knew
Cassandra Wilson (v), Steve Coleman (as, perc.), Graham Minicucci III (b), Jean-Paul Baerly (g), Lonnie Placido (b), Mark Johnson (d).

JMT IS A NEW MUNICH LABEL THAT will be taken seriously faster if it finds itself a new graphic artist. Inside the tacky, unattractive sleeves is music of a very high level. On Coleman's record I don't even trust the track-listing: it's out-of-sync with what I'm hearing; trumpet materialises where it shouldn't, officially, and doesn't where it should. This makes it difficult to talk about individual tunes with any coherence.

As a whole, the performance is a blast. Anybody who has heard Coleman with Dave Holland, Sam Rivers or Doug Hammond should have sensed his importance by now. While most saxophonists of his generation, and the one preceding it, are unquestionably rooted in middle-period Coltrane, Steve, a 30-year-old Chicagoan, is thoroughly up on his Charlie Parker. It's a long time since we've heard an almost push ideas across with such speed and melodic invention. Colleagues claim to perceive a lack of emotion in his sound. Don't miss it, myself; "emotion" in jazz is mostly a matter of technique, anyway. If Coleman lacks it, he'll nail it shortly. The principal players, especially Allen and Smith, sound really good. Gen Allen, who has a couple of albums on her own on the Minor Music label (the Malsch-based parent label to JMT), is a remarkably comprehensive pianist. New York Times critic Don Palmer even purports to hear George Clinton in her sound which may be stretching the imagination somewhat but certainly funk, as defined by Horace Silver, is here: passing references to Ellington and more than a nod to Monk, too,

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mark the pathway to the end of the acoustic piano tradition. Gen Allen's Ceciliums are as good as anybody else's. Coleman's compositions are built upon the firmest rhythmic understanding, too.

Unfortunately, the line-up assembled for Cassandra Wilson's debut as a leader seems under-rehearsed, and does not kick as hard as it might. Coleman's two tunes there are easily the most outstanding, despite the presence of Miles' "Blue In Green" (some numbers become standards out of habit). Good to hear Grachan Monor III under any circumstances and there's nothing wrong with Ms Cassandra that a more carefully prepared session would not swiftly put right. Mysterious, dark tone she has, some distance from the light-as-a-feather voices we've grown used to (Purim, Winstone etc) yet some of the scat passages seem, well, pointless, mere filler. With a righter band behind her she'd be a terrific pop/blues singer. Put Sale out of business at a stroke. Over and out.

Steve Lake

SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON THE CHESSE YEARS

Green Line Chess Box 1
Includes every title recorded by Williamson for Chess Records. 85 tracks recorded Chicago 1955-61 on six LPs

DURING THE 60s, SONNY BOY Williamson embodied every romantic European notion of a bluesman: irascible, lecherous (drooling over young admirers on *Ready Steady Go*), relentless tabernacle of tall tales about his own life and his place at the centre of blues history. As a harmonica player he wasn't as skilful as Little Walter or Shakey Horton, but his playing suited his characterful voice. He was largely responsible for the harmonica's popularity with white blues bands.

No one could guess that, 20 years after his death, every title he recorded for Chess Records in Chicago would be assembled in a lavish set like this. Edited and distributed in the UK by Charly Records, it follows their similarly extravagant anthology of Sun Records' blues. That compilation covers dozens of artists, this relies on one. Neil Slaven's comprehensive sleeve-note in the accompanying booklet admits that not every Williamson track is a classic — the most ardent fan might struggle to get through 85 tracks at one sitting.

Charly has sensibly avoided the 70s obsession with alternative takes, complete sessions in endless detail. Instead, the most revealing alternative takes are on one LP: enjoyment of any title isn't marred by false starts, but we see how a session changed, sometimes improved a song. Otherwise, the arrangement is roughly chronological.

Sonny Boy's birth date is typically

uncertain, but he was probably nearly 60 when he first recorded for Chess, after an itinerant 25 years playing where and when he felt like it. He borrowed (stole) his name and some of his harmonica style from one of Chicago's biggest '30s stars — not uncommon before TV established what stars actually looked like. He eventually became even more celebrated than his predecessor, making his first records in Mississippi in the early 50s before joining the trek north and making his Chess debut in 1955.

That first Chicago session featured an all-star band including Muddy Waters and Otis Spann, but only one track stood out: "Don't Start Me Talkin'" has an inventive lyric, agile harmonica, warm singing over a rocking rhythm which, as Slaven points out, had to compete with Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley for Chess' promotional budget. Sonny Boy was never teen-orientated, but even at 60 he knew how to move.

For ten years he was one of Chicago's busiest bluesmen, able to watch at close quarters the death and mummification of the classic Chicago sound. We hear him establishing a close rapport with the city's best musicians, notably guitarist Robert Jr Lockwood, often producing fine blues with distinctive lyrics: "Fattening Frogs For Snakes", "Your Funeral And My Trial", "Santa Claus".



Only two of Sonny Boy's 50s records made the red chart. The 60s necessitated a few concessions to modernity, saxes in 1963-4, and, most tellingly, a single 1963 session when four tracks were recorded with an organ. Logically, this combination of archaic bluesman and modish organ should have been disastrous, but the results were excellent, the texture of voice and harmonica nicely echoed by the droning organ. At least one track, "Bring It On Home", has enough sly appeal for a pop hit, proving conclusively that "authenticity" isn't the only virtue the blues should aim for. Two years later, Sonny Boy died, never able to capitalize on his new-found European popularity.

All this and much more is superbly documented and packaged in a sturdy box to last several lifetimes. Reasonably priced, the set should sell well, perhaps encouraging the same treatment for Muddy Waters, whose complete Chess oeuvre has been similarly

boxed in Japan, selling at over £100. Charly can undercut that. Perhaps it's charlism to suggest that an equally carefully compiled double LP of the genuine "Best of Sonny Boy" might win over those who swoon at six LPs by one artist. Not every blues fan is a completist.

That suggestion in no way diminishes my gratitude for this set, a fine memorial to a wonderful character.

Nick Kimberley

MECOY TYNER & JACKIE McLEAN IT'S ABOUT TIME

(Blue Note BT 85102)
Recorded: New York, April 1985
Spur Of The Moment; You Taught My Heart To Sing; It's About Time; Hip-Ton; No Flowers Please; Traveller.
Jon Faddis (s); McLean (as); Tyner (p); Ron Carter (b); Marcus Miller (e-b); Al Foster (d); Steve Thornton (perc)

WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT OF SUCH impeccable musicians? Music with no peccs, of course. The double heading is a mine misleading though. It's Tyner's album. McLean helps out while the pianist plays with two separate rhythm sections. For half the tracks he and Foster are joined by Ron Carter, on the others Carter is replaced by Miller's electric bass and Foster's drumming is supplemented by Thornton's percussion (mostly superfluous I'm afraid).

It's straightforward, undemanding stuff, its accessibility enhanced by the precision, clarity and balance of the impeccably audiophile recording. Only Faddis, joining the Carter group for two numbers, begins to sound as if he's stretching himself. I've not cared for the piercing note-stuffed lines I've heard him play elsewhere but, on "Spur Of The Moment" in particular, his rich seamlessness provides an intriguing contrast to McLean's drier, easier sound and he makes some mean and affecting glissandos too.

This opener is probably the best track on the album. The rhythm section makes way for Faddis rather than accompanying him but behind McLean they begin to open out so char, by the time they're out on their own, Tyner's most ambitious solo benefits from the full force of Carter alternating four to the bar runs with suspended slides and Foster's plashing cymbal work. Just as tongues begin to speak everyone hits the theme in unison to real dramatic effect and the tune comes to a driving full stop.

The Miller/Thornton group's best moment is the title track. It opens sparingly enough with McLean giving us the catchy little tune straight and some rather irritating rocking percussion from Thornton. Gradually, as McLean takes a hard-edged hard ported solo and Miller moves from slaps to bolches, it becomes raunchier until, just as the interest is really engaged, the theme returns, the rock with it, and the whole thing fades (a practice I abhor, I mean what if

Steve Lewis

1. Ran Blake, Camden on Camera, Eric Dolphy, Steve Lacy, Harold Land, Leo Records, Wynon Marsalis; Art Pepper tribute; Max Roach; Scattering & Bopping; Seven Steps to Jazz - Trumpet; John Stevens Part I; Women Love

8. Cadillac Records; Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*; Count Basie tribute; Ted Curson, Miles Davis concert, Festivals - Meters and Le Mans, Barry Guy, Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand); Metalanguage, Michel Petruccianni; Seven Steps - Bass

9. Art Ensemble of Chicago, Benny Carter, Chilly R&B; Andrew Cyrille, Manu Dibango, Tom Macero; Meredith Monk, Paul Murphy, Oliver Nelson's *The Blues and the Abstract Truth*, Recording Improvised Music, Trevor Watts' *Moiré Music*; Where Were You In 62?

10. Alterations; Armstrong's *West End Blues*; Amin Baraka, Black Masks, White Masks; Art Blakey; Biorhythmic Jazz At The Phil to issues, Hugh Masekela, Thelonious Monk, Jerry Wexler

15. Derek Bailey, Martha & Fontella Bass; George Benson, Essential Coltrane, Charles Mingus - Pirhe-

canchopus Erectus, Pat Metheny, Jim Mullen, Norma Winston

16. Anthony Braxton, Cotton Club, Peter King, Omeka, Essential Dolphy, Incus Festival, Zoo Sims; Gil Scott-Heron, Clifford Brown & Max Roach

17. Ray Charles; John Gilmore, Herbie Nichols, Daniel Ponce; Jazz in Paris; Betty Boop, Paladini, Afro-Jazz

18. Sonny Rollins, Bobby McFerrin, Jayne Cortez, Stanley Jordan; Tommy Chase, Bertrand Tavernier, Joe Farrell (great issue!)

19. Ornette Coleman, Charlie Haden; Steve Lacy, Boyd Rice, Slim Gaillard, Movie Jazz; Peter Ind, Urban Sax

20. Art Blakey, Wynton & Beauford Marsalis, Bobby Watson, Hank Mobley, Ganelin Trio, Box Heidelberg; Impulse & Blue Note reissues

21. Chet Baker, Cuba, Jamsaladeen Tucuma, Michael Nymen, Duke Ellington, Pinkie Zoo, Man Wilson

22. John Coltrane, Ruben Blades, Nathan Davis; James

Blood Ullmer, Depravaty, Guest Stars

23. Bill Laswell, Anita O'Day, Charlie Watts, Loose Tubes, Celia Cruz, Mathilde Santing, Lester Bowie; Donald Banks, Arto Lindsay

24. Betty Carter; John Abercrombie, Sidney Bechet, Jimmy Smith, Maggie Nicols; Vienna Art Orchestra; Bill Evans; Zaire

25. Young Sceptophones; Courtney Pine, Tommy Smith, Iain Ballamy, Nigel Hitchcock, Paul Moran, Leslie Thompson; Luciano Benio; George Coleman; Jazz Cartoons; Chicago; New York; Duke Ellington

26. Lester Young, Toussaint Kunda, Shanker; Jazz DJs, Gerry Mulligan; Gospel, Scottish Jazz Composers, Sun Ra, Terry Riley

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T H I R D S T R E A M

Continued from page 21

Often this LP's music tends to elaborate statements, but "Doktor Mabuse", where Blake is heard with the percussionist George Schuller, is fiercely laconic, having an almost threatening aspect which relates to the above treatment of "Carolina Moon".¹² holding to parallel lines then going their very separate ways. "Carolina Moon" marks another large shift of emphasis. Ever since Monk gave this the 6/4 Blue Note treatment in 1952¹⁰ it has been hard to remember that he did not compose it. A performance by Dan Brcker (tenor saxophone), Tom Regis (piano) and Ed Felson (bass) refers back to the Benny Davis-Joe Burke original yet has a character altogether its own - dark, full of a stalking sense of menace. This is the longest track on the LP and rightly so, being easily the most memorable.

Such pieces should be heard in conjunction with the small combo performances of various instrumentation on another Blake LP, *Film Noir*.¹¹ This embodies his musical responses, some of them fairly programmatic, to 11 outstanding films, six of the themes being from the soundtracks, the others his own. Again the players are drawn almost entirely from the New England Conservatory's Third Stream Department, although a notable exception is Ted Curson, heard with Blake in "Garden of Delight", where harsh, rapidly chattering piano figures and brazen trumpet phrases form an abrasive mixture. Daryl Lowery is heard on alto saxophone in the intently brooding, though also sharply accented, "Gardenia" and he lends it a more evident

continuity than the foregoing duos. John Heiss's flute has a similar effect in "Pinky" despite the churning turbulence which underlies that quartet performance.

It is instructive to follow these pieces with the trio version of "Key Largo", where the yearning insistence of Benny Carter's melody is preserved, the texture's fragmentation notwithstanding. This can be set beside Lowery's arrangement of another traditionally inclined item, the Quincy Jones "Pawnbroker" theme, which, like "Arlene" on *Third Stream Today*, plays fast and loose with big band conventions, although breaking completely free in the middle section. Blake's own "Touch Of Evil" music also uses largish resources and is closer to the *Third Stream Today* items than most of what is on *Film Noir*. Here repeated patterns evoke George Russell in a wilder Workshop, but the point is the way that the concerted passages take up some of the implications of the composer's own playing. This seems to be confirmed by his very brief "Le Beuchet" solo which immediately follows, and which, he writes on the Arista sleeve, "concentrates on the mystery of the confusion and ultimate despair of Chabrol's heroine". It says much for Blake that he is able so concisely to encapsulate such glowering oppressiveness

NOTES

- 1) *Third Stream Today*, Golden Crest NEC116, *Third Stream: The Second Chapter*, New England Conservatory NEC123.
- 2) *Grover Sales: Jazz - America's Classical Music*, page 49 (Prentice-Hall, Englewood

- Cliffs, N.J., 1984).
- 3) Quoted in Whitney Balliett: *Dismissed In The Morning*, page 215 (Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1962).
- 4) Gunther Schuller: "Third Stream Redefined" in *Saturday Review*, 13 May 1961, page 54.
- 5) From a lecture, "Third Stream And The Importance Of The Ear", the text of which originally was published in the *College Music Symposium*. It is more accessible, however, in *Jazz Forum* 92 (1985).
- 6) Further music by Zak can be heard on his *Phoenix LP*, Gabriel ZA1001.
- 7) This performance of "Wende" should be compared with Blake's solo piano version on Owl 05 and the one with Chris Connor on Arista Novus AN3006. The former is noted in Ran Blake: *Third Stream Compositions* (Margan Music, Newton Centre, Mass., n.d.).
- 8) On Albert Ayler's *Spirits Rejoice LP*, ESP 1020.
- 9) Charles Ives: "Essays Before A Sonata" reprinted in *Three Classics In The Acoustics Of Music*, page 109 (Dover Books, New York, 1962). For some interesting new comments on this concept see Peter Burkholder: *Charles Ives - The Ideas Behind The Music* (Yale University Press, 1985).
- 10) *The Complete Blue Note Recordings Of Thelonious Monk*, Mosaic MR4-101.
- 11) Ran Blake: *Film Noir*, Arista Novus AN3019.
- 12) A version of Blake's "Portfolio of Dr Mabuse" recorded by the New England Conservatory Symphony Orchestra in 1979 appears on Owl 029.

CRAIG HARRIS
Tributes

OTC Records/OTC 304

Recorded: no details
High Life, D.A.S.H. (For Distro), *Some Places, New Faces*; *24 Days An Hour*, Lorna, *Underground Journey*
 Craig Harris (tr, didjeridoo), Olu Dara (c, bca, African tr), Vincent Chancy (tr b), Junior Vega (t), Dave Holland (b, c), Billy Higgins (dr), Don Moye (dr, perc)

IN THE LAST TEN YEARS CRAIG

Harris has established himself as one of the music's foremost young instrumentalists and, together with Ray Anderson and George Lewis, has helped to reaffirm the trombone's value as a frontline horn. Harris has played with well-known big bands like Sun Ra's Arkestra and The Liberation Music Orchestra, but it's his small-group work — with Abdullah Ibrahim, Joseph Jarman, David Murray,

Henry Threadgill, and on his own records — which has really caught the ear.

Tributes is his third LP as leader and arguably his best to date, if for no other reason that it highlights Harris the composer/arranger organizing his charts with formidable acuity. Though his compositions rely heavily on strong horn riffs and bass lines, he deploys his resources cannily around this structural axis, and a grounding in world music permits him to draw from a variety of cultural traditions. So "High Life" evokes Nigerian pop, "24 Days An Hour" is a sardonic work song, "Some Places, New Faces" nods to bebop, and his ballads "D.A.S.H." and "Lorna" recall Mingus with their sense of deeply felt but soberly spoken emotions.

Harris is no slave to tradition, though. His sources are subsumed within his own musical voice, which can range from rough-hewn exuberance to brooding restraint, but nearly

always carries a touch of gravity: a pleasing *weightiness* that is distinctly his. The star-studded line-up here acquit themselves well: Chancy is all airy elegance on "D.A.S.H.", Dara typically versatile (and a mean horn-blower on "24 Days An Hour"), while Harris himself is full of dashing snorts and growls, yet capable of immense tenderness on "Lorna". He also plays his didjeridoo on the closing "Underground Journey", an eerie, mournful track that conjures up a Hades of breathy gurgles and strange howlings through which David Holland's elegiac cello moves with dignity.

Tributes is a fine album. Well orchestrated and energized by some lively collective blowing, it's a fair reflection of Craig Harris's current musical eminence: no dictator, but still a 'bone apart.

Graham Lock

GENE AMMONS: *Night Lights* (Prestige P-7862)

Quietly influential in his day, Ammons was a rugged and wholesome improviser who relied on his powerful tone to carry the day. Some say the test of a good jazz musician is the ability to blow a good ballad — if so, then Ammons was one of the best. Here he demonstrates absolute control of the tenor on numbers like "Nature Boy" and "Lush Life" supported by Wynton Kelly piano, George Duvivier bass and Rudy Collins drums who never let the interest flag. The surprise is that this album has not been available before — it's as good as anything Ammons ever did.

Stuart Nicholson

CLAUDIO RODITI: *Claudio* (Upstart

UP27 27). If all the tracks were up to the standard of "Karioka" this would be an excellent album. They aren't, so it isn't. Roditi can be a crackling bop trumpeter, but his preference for romantic settings makes this album a little precious. Mulgrew Miller and Rufus Reid continually make things happen in the rhythm section, but the arrangements of Don Sickler frequently detract with their lush harmonies. The album does have its moments though, and "Nefertiti" heads for the open spaces after an unpromising start.

Stuart Nicholson

E A S T L I C K S

FABRIZIO MARCHESI: *Soul* (Passport

LPPS 11135). An accomplished recital by renoman Marchesi and his friends Luciano Milanese (b) and Giancarlo Pillor (d). It's rather obviously Rollins copy, and unlike, say, Francois Jeanneau, Sgr Marchesi doesn't involve anything very European in his slant on the master. But he paces himself through a long set very well, seldom short of a meaningful way of keeping up the flow, and there's a particularly good "Now's The Time" where ambitious phrases are daringly brought off.

Richard Cook

CLARK TERRY: *Color Changes* (Candid

P L A Y L I S T

SUN RA Sound Of Joy (*Delmark*)
 THELONIOUS MONK *Cross Cross* (CBS)
 WATHER REPORT *Domino Theory* (CBS)
 BRECKENRIDGE BROTHERS *Crullbrook*
 MILLS DAVIS *Man With The Horn* (CBS)
 ROLAND KIRK *Bright Moments* (*Atlantic*)
 BRECKENRIDGE BROTHERS *Crullbrook* (*Atlantic*)
 LACY RUDDICARTER/HARRIS *Trickles* (*Black Swan*)
 MORRISSEY *Murphy's Badness* (*Columbia*)
 Jani Bayly *Cherish*

LOLO LOLLITA & TCHICO Le Retour Des Evodes De Pontom La Belle (*Bouhou*)
 JULIE TAYLOR Winged Serpent (*Soul Note*)
 GDEAN POPE Almost Like Me (*Alben Main*)
 DON CHERRY Symphony For Improvisers (*Blue Note*)
 ORNETTE COLEMAN Broken Shadows (CBS)
 MIKE OSBORNE Marcel's Muse (*Ogoun*)
 SAM MANG'ANA In Nairobi, Fumba Ya Bubu (ASL)
 OLOMIDE Ngobila (*Afro Rhythms*)
 VARIOUS The Nairobi Sound (*Original Main*)
 Ian Anstruther *Manfield*

9009). A bristling mainstream-into-modern set from 1960, headed up by the trumpeter everybody likes. On hand are Jimmy Knipper, Julius Watkins, Yusuf Lateef, Seldon Powell and Tommy Flanagan, and the tunes are the sort of ingenious miniatures you associate with Ellington small groups. Budd Johnson arranges a couple of them, Yusuf melts on oboe on one track but otherwise digs in on tenor, and Knipper and Watkins are famously pungent. The opening "Blue Waltz" works thematically and as a frame for good solos, and that double excellence is pursued through the whole LP.

Richard Cook

VALENTINA PONOMAREVA: *Fortune Teller* (*Leo LR 136*). Ponomareva mixes jazz, Russian and gypsy singing into an often dizzying but always invigorating cocktail. *Fortune Teller* is clearly intended as an introduction to her music and the various elements don't blend quite as well as they might. The long "Spontaneous Composition" sounds much as you'd expect and just fails to combust. Even so, there are marvellous, outrageous versions of Lennon and McCartney's "Michelle" and (with Vladimir Chekasin on reeds) "Ain't Misbehavin'". All in all, a remarkable talent. I ended up stirred, and not a little shaken.

Brian Morton

THE FALL This Nations Saving Grace (*Beggars Banquet*)
 CHICK COREA Return To Forever (ECM)
 ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO Third Decade (ECM)
 BURTON/GORFA Crystal Silence (ECM)
 ORNETTE COLEMAN Of Human Feelings (*Arnell*)
 RONALD KIRK We Free Kings (*Tripp*)
 JACK DEJONNETTE Special Edition (ECM)
 HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT Back In The DHSS (*Prize Play*)
 Jon Cox *Grassroots*



Continued from page 33

with him. Because the great thing about that way of doing things – numbered works in series – you have a clear sense of your own development. This is much harder to come by when every performance can be substantially the same as the last one. The way things move for me is backwards and forwards, revisiting old material, revamping ideas or hoping for new stuff, but never quite sure when it'll come or how much of it is revamping and how much is a kind of meditation or preparation to bring about the most auspicious mental states for new ideas to come.

This is where neurones come into play, because if I look at the sound of the way I first played solo 11 years ago and listen to the way I play now there are quite clearly some marked developments.

The most simply observed difference is that the material is rather more complex than it was back then. That has been a pretty continuous trend over the period.

So at this point, 11 years on, there's this feeling that, OK, the freedom of spontaneity is being lost, there's a hardening off into structures that are more like composition. Or people might say simply, is he still doing that? All those feelings come to me in those moments of vulnerability, making me blind to the quite obvious fact that there is progress, that I'm moving ahead from point to point, and every so often a new idea, a new set of possibilities comes. It might be from a combination of two old things, which were once only playable separately that have now become playable together, or the stealing of an idea from someone else and shifting it from the context of their work to mine to bring new life. I should be distanced enough from my own practice now to see there's nothing to be nervous about. But that is easier thought than felt.

BK: How do you feel about composition now? Is it some kind of temporary refuge?

It's like stepping outside of your normal psychological state and being asked to look at your work from another point of view. It is a good break, a mental breath of fresh air, to just give someone something as raw material, which might be used 1000 different ways, depending on how the artist/producer finally chooses to treat the tape. And in a way I quite like that.

BK: The abrogation of final responsibility?

Yeah, so long as I'm convinced in some way of the artist's original integrity of purpose.

BK: Before we leave composition, did you ever intend recently to participate in work by composers like Michael Nyman and Penderecki alongside with your accepting certain aspects of professionalism and the broader recognition of your abilities?

Not really. They are nice surprises when they happen because obviously they're not under my control. If someone like Nyman thinks it would be interesting to hear me in his context then it is his decision and I did my best on that occasion. And it did give me the opportunity to discover that many of the kind of patterns I played could go back to the more basic harmony that Michael uses. So arpeggios don't always have to include chromatic extensions above the octave. They can be straightforward repetitions above it. Those kinds of things lay much easier under the hands of the saxophone because of the way it's built. It was also fun to do.

BK: Do you ever work from a position of antagonism where you try to exclude someone? Have you yourself felt excluded?

Sometimes, yeah. But it can be all in your mind. There's always a way to unlock it, but it doesn't always come to you. For me, now, a classic example would be trying to play with Derek and Han Bennink. They're masters of that armadillo-like imperviousness, they can't afford to take their eye off one another to deal with you.

BK: Not to mention the added danger of Han Bennink's clowning. Do you enjoy that clown element that can arise out of improvising, or do you find it draining?

I like to watch it. I'm never quite sure what to do when I'm onstage with it.

BK: Is there an element of showmanship bound up in the stamina it takes to sustain some of your techniques?

At one period I thought I'd overcome that by laying out very clearly in the first piece that there was no physical problem involved, eliminate that from people's thinking by playing a 20-minute piece on a continuous theme without interruption, no pause for breath. But that became counterproductive in terms of communication because it was turning the rest of the concert into an anti-climax. Now I approach it without a clear plan, or the plan is constantly adhered to and then abandoned. In general I think about building from simple to complex, but it never works out like that. I start but think, oh, this is ridiculous, and do something else.

BK: Let's stir in some questions from Richard Cook. What are the most marked progressions between Saxophone Solos and The Snake Decides?

I guess there's more going on. There's a more complex sense of linearity to the point where the line folds back on itself and assumes some of the proportions of vertical music, and some of the characteristics of polyphonic music, well, a pseudo-polyphonic music.

RC: Should extremes of register be investigated on other instruments?

No. If I have any thoughts about other instruments it's maybe I play one to many

already by playing two. If I've considered anything seriously, it's giving up either the tenor or soprano. Anyway, the weight of the lowest register of the tenor is low and full enough and the upper extremes of soprano go above audibility, not continuously, but it can be faked up there. So if I want to look about up there or down below to see what can be done with different tones and resonances I know ways of producing them already.

RC: What extremes remain to be discovered?

The formal answer to that question is further research into techniques of articulation and pseudo-polyphonic procedures, combining techniques which used to be in isolation from one another, aspects of embouchure, control of fingering, articulation or breathing, to see what comes out of those combinations. Sometimes it's as predictable as addition, you get exactly what you expect, other times it's entirely unpredictable.

For example, if you extend the notion of superimposed rhythms to beyond the fingers breaking down across the two hands – you have two basic rhythm patterns happening across the two hands – and then superimpose a related but different pattern of articulation from the tongue, you get a final result that is very hard to predict – because there's a three-layer process of filtering that might throw up patterns of accented notes which you couldn't think up. I'd say that's one thing I'm working on for future use, tonguing and circular breathing at the same time.

RC: Is it necessary to imbue your solo work by periods of group playing?

Definitely. It's very important not to get lost in the solo world. It's very lonely and the other players are a fantastic source of inspiration. For instance George Lewis encouraged me to think that combined tonguing and circular breathing was possible. And to still be in touch with people, still playing and being on good friendly terms with them after so many years is the best part of the music really.

BK: Do you see any value in artistic theft, the lifting of phrases or melodies?

I think it happens. Sometimes someone makes an artistic breakthrough to something you were working towards. The real test is the use you make of the technique. I'd say you could see how basic procedures from Coltrane, Dolphy, Steve Lacy, John Tchicai have had a profound influence on me. If you sift the music for it you'll find it. It comes out different ways different nights. But that's the tradition, the specific jazz tradition, my little piece of the tradition.

BK: A final question from Richard. Do you think your music is too clever?

(Laughs) Too clever by halves

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HYPING

AN INTERESTING YOUNG TURK

section in your March issue, especially the Courtney Pine piece, within which Nick Coleman noted the 'hype tank' in which such artists can find themselves

In Nick's otherwise excellent piece he seemed to consider that there was major difficulty in the circuit maintaining the 'hyped' person. I would have thought that was not the point at all as, even if one has to resort to emphasising the person and not their skills, the aim is to place such artists in work areas outside the circuit of their own idiom. Jazz is not the only form of music which is apparently locked in its own work circuit! Reggae used to be, and soca is – and in each of these examples, such music has a Black foundation and anyone in England playing such music(s) has to be content with being considered a copyist, or 'not the real thing'.

Unlike conscious crossover, which purposely leaves the circuit behind, in order to move to 'higher ground', the further aim of this form of hype is to retain the article uncluttered, and try to make the musician more popular, so they can also get better work on their normal, basic circuit.

Taking such a conscious route does necessitate a different form of awareness from the musician in the eye of this exposure needle. It is of note that *Wire* itself considers that it is

now "The Jazz and New Music Magazine" while Ashley Slater, talking to Brian Case in *Melody Maker* about Loose Tubes noted, "We're guilty of prima donna complex. We want this and we want that, not realising that most pop bands are grateful to get two seconds of anything, anywhere, ever."

Likewise the attitude to Ronnie Scott's club by musos – 'what is a jazz club doing putting on all this pop crap?' I feel that having an artist like Maria Muldaur in such a setting is a positive act unto itself, especially as with her last season at the club, one gets the Peter King Quartet in addition. If one does not like Maria, you do not have to attend; the money can be saved in order to see Chet Baker and George Coleman. The reason one can see such jazz musicians is because of the presentations which are more in the commercial mainstream.

Terence Hulme, London W11

TRACKING

STUART NICHOLSON REVIEWING THE Freddie Hubbard *Here to Stay* in *Wire*

December 1985, claims that it was never actually issued. In fact it was issued in a "Twofer" series in 1976 in North America in tandem with *Hab Cap* with identical liner notes from Peter Keepnews.

It was widely available on import in Britain as part of the series which included the Sonny Rollins out-takes from the *Village Vanguard*, McCoy Tyner's unissued twofer with string

players, Andrew Hill's *disto* etc. etc.

Frank Xerxes, London.

LACKING

LET'S HOPE GEORGE RUSSELL'S

concerts in Birmingham, Coventry, Newcastle and Sheffield were as well attended as his recent one at the Logan Hall. If they were, it won't be thanks to *WIRE*. I would have thought that the first UK visit from one of the two greatest living jazz composer/arrangers would at least have merited a pre-visit background article. Yes, I know Max Harrison did an excellent three partter back in issues 3/5 but that only took the recorded story to 1980.

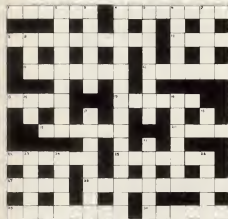
This lack of topicality in British jazz magazines has always puzzled me. Gil Evans got similar treatment to Russell in 1978, I know it's difficult with a monthly to keep it topical, but what excuse can there be for ignoring Russell's visit – it was trailed by the Contemporary Music Network at least three months ago.

Similarly, why no coverage of the Jazz Centre saga? Even Channel Four News managed an article on this one (so I'm told).

Bob Cornwell.

We thought that Max's opn was probably enough on Mr Russell. His visit was listed in our hard-pressed news section – with the obvious other publicity, we hope most readers knew about it. - RC

JAZZWORD



ANSWERS
NEXT MONTH

COMPILED
BY TIM COLWELL

ACROSS

- 1 Definitely not Welsh, this furry Dukensian! (6)
4 A belly-up pianist! (4,4)
8 When 6's associates struck a solid groove (try saying that fast!) there'd be no end to it, firstly (6,4)
10 A jazz label! (4)
11 Whar, me boss! Blow own flute, perhaps! (3,4)

- 12 Talcott, Martha, Red, Jim . . . or could be old Stewards. (6)
13 Solfegego: five and four couched in new term. (4)
15 Eddie Calvert thin inside, somehow? Better for racing!! (6)
19 Famous affirmations! (3-3)
20 see 26 and 14 Down.
22 see 5 and 7 Down
25 Hamp's long-time lunar trumpeter. (7)

- 27 Tunesful, but diminutive, Gerry. (4)
28 Gospel shaker! (10)
29 "Alto Saxophonist plagiarise Eric Dolphy!" (8)
30 Baseball groundsman played fancy piano, we hear. (6)

DOWN

- 2 Beef Tax? F.U!! All-round good horn, tho', many say. (6,3)
3 Go Stan! Tag onto the coming craze, son!! (6)
4 "Patel! Heed thy Memtsahib!" Take it out, Mr. Flory! (4,3,5,3,3)
5 Sousa March often played traditionally not the best place to be, except on a Friday! (5,3,6,5) (See 7 down and 22 across)
6 Make sure it's the right Bill! (5)
7 see 5 Down and 22 Across
9 Lady compared with fermented apple juice (3)
14 see 26 Down and 20 Across
16 Simply, where the music goes. (4,3)
17 Oliver paid the Bill, or should have come across Smith the Alto. (2,3,3,3)
18 The hush of Radio Fir (1,1)
19 Not the brightest seventh day, according to the song. (6)
23 Trumpeter Jimmy is almost Old news these days. (5)
24 Billy who often got together with Benny What a shower, we hear! (5)
26 Believe it or not, some drummers don't have it! (5,2,4) (see 14 down and 20 across)



COMING IN MAY

Art Pepper on tape, on record

Terence Blanchard: Young chap with a horn

Han Bennink: Say what?

WIRE

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DEBUT ALBUM OUT NOW

KINTONE

GOING HOME STERNS 1013



KINTONE TOUR DATES

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| MAY 6th | BAND ON THE WALL
Manchester |
| MAY 7th | THE TRIANGLE
Birmingham |
| MAY 13th 18th | HOLLAND |
| MAY 20th | MORRIS HALL
Glasgow |
| MAY 27th | PIPER CLUB
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"... it is a gorgeous synthesis of rolling African rhythms and strong, jazzy melodies." *BLUES & SOUL* Nov. 1985

"KINTONE is a meeting of many musical influences with the emphasis on accessible elements from township jazz, Caribbean and Afro-American which together form a melodic jazz-funk groove. The guitarist, Russel Herman and the saxophonist Frank Williams are both from Cape Town, South Africa, from the frontline communities."

The "Streetscene" 16 Nov. 1985

"... vivid, pain-ridden sketches evoking South Africa's beating heart... The music, though far from simple, is direct, unfussy, and clear in its message—and you can dance to it." *City Limits* Jan. 1986

"During songs like 'Going Home' and 'Freedom's Song', the group play some insistent melodies which draw the listener into layered sound. *New Musical Express* Dec. 1985

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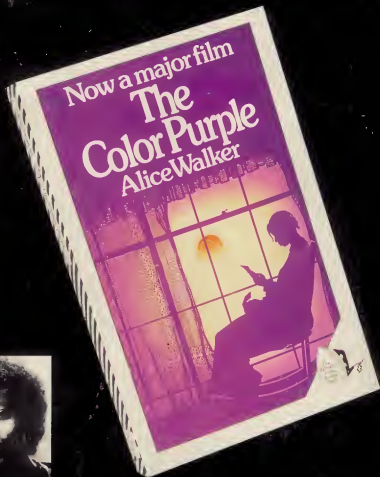


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